

Winter, Amalie

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A SIMPLE TALE OF LOVE.

BY AMALIE WINTER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY MADAME DE CHATELAIN.

THE baronial family at the château of Waldenburg were spending the twilight each according to their humor. The father and mother were dozing in the ponderous easy-chairs of the study; the guests were resting in their several rooms; the children were all gathered together in the nursery, for the sake of the little light it afforded, as the darker rooms seemed "uncanny" to their young fancies, and in the recess of one of the windows sat a pair of lovers, in sweet converse, not unmixed with kisses. Lovers, above all, must prize those twilight hours, where the blush passes unseen, though not unperceived, and where the holy feeling of love assumes a warmer and deeper language than that of mere words. Such was the twilight hour at Waldenburg, when, besides tea and candles, the arrival of an aunt was expected.

"What is this aunt like?" inquired young Hugo von Stein, the lover, who felt somewhat put out by her promised visit; for he thought her presence

would disturb him in the enjoyment of his privilege of kissing and courting his future bride, as he set it down that the aunt must be a prudish old maid.

Antoinette, his intended, said, in answer to his question:—"My aunt is a widow, very friendly and kind, and still rather pretty, though old. She is my father's youngest sister, and must be thirty, if not a few months more."

To a girl of sixteen, thirty seems a great age; but her lover, being himself not far from that age, and having seen the world, smiled at the opinion expressed by the young maiden, and though he might not perhaps have read Balzac's *Femme de trente ans*, he perfectly understood the charm of riper beauty, and of an experienced mind blended with feelings more conscious of its own strength.

"My aunt reads a great deal, and tells a story very pleasantly," continued Antoinette; "she smiles, and laughs, and jokes, and is frolicsome; but she likes to philosophize, too, sometimes, and when she tells stories, she sprinkles them with reflections, as one strews flowers on the table for a birthday, sometimes more and sometimes less, just as it happens. But she only works out a part of a tale, and never completes it, and then she suddenly ends it as if she were tired of relating it, or as if she thought her hearer's patience was at an end. Perhaps she does so from a liking

that people should wish to hear more, and reproach her for cutting it so short. 'There is a crisis in every one's life,' she says, in reply; 'and, when this is once told, there is little left to say; yet this crisis gives a color to one's whole existence, and from it characters receive their peculiar stamp.' So says my aunt; and then her story is done."

The intended bridegroom was so much interested by this account, that he forgot to seal his beloved's mouth with a kiss, when she had finished speaking. "I shall like very much to become acquainted with your aunt," said he, with something like a sigh.

"That is a pleasure that you can easily command," said a soft voice at his side, that proceeded from a shadowy-looking figure that had approached with so light a step as to be unperceived. "For aunt is come," continued the appearance, at the same time flinging off her fur mantle and withdrawing her veil.

"Aunt! aunt!" exclaimed Antoinette, and jumped up in high glee; she was running to call together all the inmates of the house, but the whole château was already raised. The word "aunt" rang through the nursery and on the stairs, and in a moment the whole family flocked to the room, together with the tea equipage and lights. Aunt was surrounded, stormed with ex-

pressions of joyous welcome ; questions and answers followed in rapid succession, and the very servants were sharers in the general joy.

Antoinette's lover alone remained a silent observer ; amidst the moving circle he could look on nothing but aunt, and yet she was by no means handsome. Her eyes had the soul-inspired look of intellect and feeling, her smile was sweet and full of self-denial, and her melodious voice was persuasion itself. She was rather pale, yet her cheek was quickly tinged by any emotion. Her hair was soft and silky, and of that blonde shade that seldom or never turns to grey. Altogether, aunt had a very interesting appearance.

"I could not kiss her, as I would Antoinette," thought Stein to himself, as he gazed at her from the recess of the window, while she sat in the great easy-chair in the full light of the lamp, and had directed her earnest glance towards her brother, who had asked and obtained information on the political events of the town she came from ; "No, I could not kiss her,—she inspires me with too much respect,—but I could kneel before her, and I could love her to very madness."

Antoinette would never have dreamt of such a possibility, because she thought her aunt too old ; it was, perhaps, lucky that she did not think it possible.

Aunt now related her travels; she called herself a female Diogenes without a lantern, seeking for men and finding them. Yes, she had found a great many men; but she only recognized as such those who acknowledged it to be their duty to do honor to the dignity of mankind — those, in short, who struggle, think, do good, and are human beings in the best sense of the word; merely to live and enjoy seemed to her beneath the dignity of our species. She had had occasion to perceive that fate very seldom strews our path with flowers, nor had she ever met with a single being who wandered amongst roses; she, therefore, could never help blaming the saying, "Wander through roses and forget-me-nots," whenever she found it inscribed on cups and saucers. But, for this very reason, she plucked flowers by the way as often as she could, and many were the little joys she experienced, and the pleasing features in her life and her travels that she had to relate, which would have escaped the perception of others.

Aunt had begun by appearing interesting, and she finished by being entertaining. Antoinette's intended became more thoughtful, and, during the twilight hour on the following evening, he more than once was guilty of yawning beside his beloved instead of kissing her, and his fate, which but a few days back appeared under such rosy

hues, now seemed itself to resemble the dusky shades of twilight. Aunt received his silent homage as that of a new and happy nephew, joked at the impassioned kiss he impressed on her hand, and at his respectful admiration of her fine eyes, and at the long and lively conversations that he carried on with her, at the conclusion of which generally neither stood out for their opinion. "You deserve to be called a man," would she then say, reaching her hand to him in a friendly manner; and he felt that in saying this she had given him the noblest praise, and even a high place in her esteem.

Antoinette was several times put out at not being able to converse with him like her aunt, and at being half overlooked by her lover on her account; she felt neglected, and secretly began to have misgivings about the inconstancy and ingratitude of the male sex. But in her heart of hearts she blamed her aunt as a coquette; for amiable women are always called so as long as they remain young.

"Aunt has not yet told us a single story." Such was the general cry; and the whole company joined in the request that she would enliven the evening by so doing. The urn had now ceased humming, and there were two hours yet to supper time, and so her story must last till then.

"Shall it be a tale or a ghost story?" said the friendly, obliging creature.

"Whatever you like," answered Antoinette, "for you relate everthing so prettily—but I should prefer a love story," and here she threw a tender look at her lover, "because then one knows that it is all true."

"True?" inquired aunt, "what do you call true? Do you mean to designate by such a word only those events that have really happened, the daily comings and goings which are visible to every eye? My good children, you little think how much that is false often happens in real life, how many lies are sometimes mixed up with love, while frequently in ghost stories there is nothing improbable beyond the winding sheet that is always thrown over the world of spirits, and the rattling of chains that announces their approach, while the tale itself perhaps expounds in the most attractive manner the hieroglyphics that the Creator has written in nature and human life. A love story, on the contrary, is like a chameleon, and appears under a thousand false colors. It is like a soap-bubble that bursts at the touch of cold reason. Who can, in fact, define what love is? To one it is a bugbear, to another a pleasing fable—ambrosia to a third, and homely fare to a fourth; youth looks upon it as champagne froth, while old age considers it as the leaven of exist-

ence, which only now and then produces an agreeable fermentation. It requires some courage to tell a love story, because so few listeners take an interest in it. The men won't pay any attention to it ; they extricate themselves so very easily from the labyrinth of love, as their Ariadne's threads are generally made of such very coarse materials ! Old women don't like either to hear anything more on the subject ; it all comes to the same in the end, say they, as all cats are grey in the dark ; in old age all love seems colorless ; it is so far removed from them that the lights and shades escape their mental vision. Women of forty, who wander about like the spirits of the departed, in the kingdom of memory, who have not yet forgotten that which they would give the world to be able to forget, are only pained by love stories ; the sighs of their youth seem to rustle through the air and fill them with sadness ; each fond word is a dagger to their souls ; they feel uneasy and chagrined. They ask themselves—why was I loved, and why am I no longer loved ? What availed the beatings of my heart, and my dreams of happiness ? Such questions rise up before them in startling array. No : women of forty cease to read love stories. Youth alone still reads them and listens to them with glowing cheeks and beating hearts, and it is for you, my

dear young folks, that I shall tell my tale of love."

Aunt then turned to the lovers: "I would fain compare my love story to those saints' pictures that ingenious nuns paint upon cobwebs. Each thread, delicate as it may be, is important in love, while every important event appears a mere thread, a trifle, a nothing, to those standing without the magic circle; therefore, my dear listeners, should the ground-work appear too thin and too poor in your eyes, you can tear the fragile texture by questions and interruptions; yet the saintly image will still remain sacred, and preserve an altar in our hearts.

"The heroine of my tale—allow me to christen her by my own name, and call her Cecilia—the heroine of my tale was—guess what?"

"A princess?"

"Heaven forbid: for then I should be obliged to introduce a mistress of the ceremonies into my love story, for which these excellent ladies are not at all calculated, as they would then be obliged occasionally to hide their heads like the ostrich. I should also have to attend to the niceties of etiquette that in many cases and many places would almost sooner suit a ghost story. Nor is my heroine a countess, or a good match of any kind; such a person is indeed a god-send for little towns, because she attracts suitors, but

she is of no use in a tale of love. I should be obliged to say how rich she was, and even to reckon up her fortune—and both moral and physical dirt always sticks to money. No! one must needs possess a pure heart and finger to weave the magic web of love. Neither have I sought a heroine amongst grisettes, although it is now the fashion, and Goëthe himself has immortalized the hand that uses a broom on Saturdays. I have not chosen my heroine amongst the small-footed Chinese, nor the fiery mulattoes, nor the *piquantes* negresses; no, my heroine is much more unromantic, has much less claims to interest, is less known and less valued, and often held much cheaper, than all those I haye mentioned—she is simply a country girl.

“ Her parents’ estate lay in Franconia, and she belonged to that class of Franconian young ladies that are called familiarly thousand florin herbs,* because their dower only consists of a thousand florins. A girl’s heart has often been compared to a sheet of blank paper; but this is a mistaken notion—the sheet is full, and more than full, but the characters are penned with sympathetic ink, and no one can read them, till peculiar circumstances render them intelligible. But on the soul of a young maiden brought up in the country

* *Tausend Gulden Kraut.*

many things stand written that are unknown to a town-bred young lady ; amongst which may be reckoned a serene childhood unshaded by the restraints of school, and a life of harmless joys.

“ Cecilia grew up like a wild lily, and nature was her governess. She perfected her dancing at country assemblies, while her taste for dress was formed by an antiquated fashion-book, whose long list of subscribers was closed by her parent’s name. Everything seemed to afford Cécilia joy, whether it was spring and its first violets, or hay-time and its merry hay-makers, or harvest and the wagon-loads of corn, or sheep-shearing. On all such occasions there was sure to be music and dancing, and numerous guests, and cakes large enough for the race of Liliputians to have held a ball upon one of them. In the country, cakes and conversation invariably go together, and all residents in the country need take a lively interest in the latter, and have a good stomach for the former.

“ Cecilia lived happy and cheerful at her father’s seat, until she was considered grown up, and of an age to be introduced into society ; she was then taken to town one winter, and for several months she took lessons in music and drawing, went to the theatres, and danced her fill. She received with gratitude all the pleasures offered her ; country and town life had an equal

charm in her eyes. Life seemed to her one continued chain of flowers, whose perfume was to be inhaled without stopping to regret the blossoms that faded away. She already began to philosophize a little, yet her views of life were still so rosy-hued, that her cheerful philosophy was as yet unchequered by the dark shades of gravity.

"On a neighboring estate lived a family on terms of intimate friendship with Cecilia's parents; and the easy intercourse peculiar to country life was carried on with all the more zest between the two houses, as all the members of each agreed so well together, and the two fathers, the two mothers, and the children, were so exactly suited to each other's taste.

"Cecilia's favorite playfellow was Robert, who was only a few years older than herself. While he was at school, he used to come home on holidays, and for all family festivities; and when he studied in town, he spent the carnival with Cecilia. The intercourse between these two was of the most hearty, friendly kind; their childlike hearts sailed on life's ocean side by side in a perpetual calm. There were no shoals, no storms; there was neither advice, reproaches, nor an obstacle of any kind thrown in their way; consequently, no passion could exist. If Cecilia had got into any dilemma with her engagements at a ball, her old playfellow would help her out of it;

if a disagreeable partner requested her hand, Robert was ready to dance with her. In short, on all occasions where Cecilia wanted a man's protection, in crowds or in public places, Robert's arm was always ready, and if she did not acknowledge how necessary and useful he was to her, it was merely because she had never known what it was to be without him.

"It was a journey to Karlsbad that first unfolded to Cecilia a new world of pleasures in which Robert had no share. She was obliged to accompany her father, who was much delighted to find there a friend of former times. This friend had a son who 'suited Cecilia as if he had been made for her, and she for him,' at least so said the fathers, and a marriage was accordingly agreed upon between them. Cecilia could not pick a fault with the young man; he was handsome, engaging, friendly, and courted her as much as people court when their parents resolve upon a match. The young man had become master of the horse in the capital; therefore, by marrying him, Cecilia would not be taken far away from her relations and the scenes of her youth. There was nothing to say against the match, not even the slightest disinclination. On the last day of their residence at the watering-place, Cecilia gave her consent without the least

persuasion, of her own free will, and in the full conviction that she had made no bad choice.

"It is true that she did not feel that full tide of bliss, that firm belief in an eternity of happiness, or that triumphant reliance on the strength of her love, that ought to be the case on such an occasion; but she thought of an establishment, of settlements, and of the wedding ball, at which Robert would dance, and she was serenely cheerful. She had several times written to Robert from Karlsbad, without exactly mentioning the master of the horse, or her matrimonial projects; but giving an account of the journey, of Karlsbad, of the promenades, the *Hirschsprung*, the Devil's whirlpool, and other sights, for she had thought of Robert as often as anything had pleased her. The whirlpool had reminded her of a sketch of his, and in the diary that she wrote on purpose for Robert, she connected every object with himself; she wished, she said, to be the eye-glass through which he should look round upon the world; and, therefore, she introduced all her acquaintances to his notice, showing the peculiar characteristics of each with all the natural quickness of a girl, seasoned by the drollery of a cloudless spirit. Thus, at first, she had mentioned the master of the horse, and heralded him in with the choicest Saxon dialect; later, she ceased to speak of him at all; during the whole time she remained

in doubt whether she should say yes or no, she never mentioned his name, as she thought it was not fair, in case she refused him, to boast of it, and afterwards, when she had decided upon consenting, a certain fear seemed to restrain her.

" Still she could not but let her old faithful playfellow know of her being affianced, and Cecilia thought it would be easier to do so in writing than in words; notwithstanding which she was a long time in writing the letter, then tore it up, and wrote several others, until at last she succeeded in making it intelligible that she was going to be married. She assured Robert, at the same time, of her warmest, deepest friendship; was convinced that he would approve her choice, and concluded by expressing a wish that he would become the friend of her future husband. In short, she wrote the strangest letter under the circumstances that could be penned, and one in which Robert vainly sought for expressions of love towards her intended, and in which he met with no warmer feelings than the friendship professed for himself. 'No,' thought he, 'not for the world would I marry in that way!' and then he locked his door, drew down the blinds, and throwing himself on the sofa, wept as he scarcely ever remembered to have wept, since he was a child. He was aware that he had loved Cecilia from his earliest youth; the beatings

of his heart had never been a riddle to him, and both the past and the future had always laid clearly mapped out before his 'mind's eye.' He had studied in the reliance on Cecilia's love; his examination had been gone through successfully, and he was just waiting for her return from Karlsbad to ask for her hand, now that he had a career open to him and could offer her a home. It is true, the home would have been but a humble one, but free from care, and such as suited the habits and education of Cecilia. He had never spoken to her of his attachment, because he thought it superfluous to speak of that which his daily and hourly actions could not but prove; besides, he thought Cecilia understood him, and knew all about it. He had mistaken the good-will she had shown him, quite undesignedly, for marks of love granted with the full consciousness of what was passing in his mind. Now all was over, and after he had wept his fill, he began to rave, first against Cecilia for having deceived him, then against women for being faithless, one and all, and lastly at his own folly for letting himself be deceived. He accused himself of vanity, and half despised himself for having mistaken her friendly behavior, and interpreted it to his own advantage.

"After going through all these conflicting emotions, he wrote a very sensible, hearty letter;

he could not, however, promise to become the friend of the master of the horse, because, though he had formerly been a friend of his, he felt considerably cooled towards him. But he would come to the wedding, as Cecilia wished it. Cecilia was a long time reading the letter ; she had every reason to be satisfied with its contents, yet somehow she was not ; she had dreaded receiving it ; some secret pang, she thought, seemed to lurk under the well-known seal ; but instead of that, every line seemed to breathe of calmness.

“ The wedding-day approached ; Cecilia looked like a contented bride. When Robert drove into the court, she hastened to the door to meet him, and stretched forth her hand to welcome him ; his own trembled in her grasp. ‘ Are you not well ? ’ inquired she, looking up at him with her blue eyes ; but he cast his eyes to the ground, and made no answer.

“ Cecilia had thought she had so much to say to her old play-fellow, and so much to tell him, and now she felt as if she had not a word to say. They both went up stairs in silence, and silent did they remain the whole evening. On the following morning, Cecilia, drest in bridal array, had already entered the drawing-room, where the family was assembled, when her bracelet became unfastened, and she hastened back to her room to have it set to rights. In her chamber she found

Robert sitting on her seat, with his arm supported on her writing-desk, and his face buried in his hand.

“‘ Robert !’ inquired Cecilia, in alarm, ‘ what is the matter with you ? Are you ill ?’ and she anxiously raised up his head, which it required all her strength to do. She was then frightened at beholding his tearful countenance, and exclaimed, while a pang of surprise shot through her heart, ‘ Are you weeping ?’

“ She had never seen Robert weep before.

“‘ Yes, I am weeping,’ answered he, ‘ and would that I could weep my life away—for I am so wretched !’

“‘ And wherefore ?’ asked Cecilia, although her own heart had already whispered the answer.

“‘ What ! can you ask why ?’ cried Robert ; ‘ did you not know that I love you, and that I looked upon you as my intended wife from a child ? and now you are about to be the wife of another, you wonder at my tears !!

“‘ Cecilia !’ called out a voice in the ante-room, and Cecilia was startled.

“‘ They are calling you,’ said Robert ; ‘ go—and be happy, Cecilia ; but I cannot be present at your marriage—no, I cannot, and will not, nor do I see why I should ; it would do you no good, and it would be death to me.’

“‘ Cecilia !’ cried the voice again.

"Cecilia felt the most poignant grief as she left her afflicted friend, and hastened back to the sitting-room. At this moment she felt all that Robert had been to her, and all that he might have become; she now knew everything, but at such a moment it was too late. The bridesmaids that had been calling her now took the trembling creature by the hand, in order to lead her to church. The bells were ringing, the bridegroom was waiting at the altar, and the priest's blessing was ready to hallow a union which threatened to stand in need of the true sanction—that of love.

"How she pronounced the 'yes' that was to bind her forever, how the rings were exchanged, and how the ceremony was got through, and wound up with the congratulations of all present, and her parents' tears of joy, Cecilia had not the slightest idea—everything seemed to dance before her as in a dream; she could think only of Robert, who loved, and who had wept over her. When the wedding-party returned to the château, he was gone.

"Cecilia's husband was very rich; he had fitted her up a mansion in town, while Robert could only have offered her a cottage in the country. Her rooms were hung with silk, and she was surrounded by all the new inventions that luxury could devise; all her visitors admired the fittings, and during the first six weeks of her married

life, she had nothing to do but to show the house to everybody. At first, she was highly delighted with all the fine things, but she soon got accustomed to them. 'After all,' thought she to herself, 'our thoughts are just the same in these modern *fauteuils* as in the old, hard-stuffed chairs, and one's heart does not bound any the lighter beneath an Indian shawl than under the simple handkerchief worn by girls of small income!' Her cheeks used to seem much rosier in the little looking-glass of her chamber than now, when she saw her image reflected from head to foot, in the richest dress and the most costly jewels.

"When Cecilia had got accustomed to all the elegancies of her new condition, they ceased to have any value in her eyes, and the young wife's heart became the scene of a tragedy unattended by spectators. Cecilia had a lively imagination, and imagination is confessedly the crucible in which a thousand amiable qualities, as well as a countless number of follies, are brought into existence, and is in particular the source of those artificial misfortunes that nobody pities, yet that have the power to throw so dark a veil of melancholy over one's whole life. She entered into the married state with the conviction that she would be unhappy; consequently all her husband's weaknesses, deficiencies, and qualities were

unbearable ; she was certain that with Robert she would have been quite happy. Sometimes she would reproach herself for not having seriously sounded her heart on the subject ; at other times she hated the husband that could have consented to a marriage proposed by their parents ; his heart must be cold, indeed, if it could put up with the small amount of love she had shown him.

“ She brooded over the past, and spelt out all the hieroglyphics of her love for Robert. She did not, however, hear from him, for he was travelling. She would have liked so to have heard something about him, yet she trembled to learn that he was married. Cecilia did not make her husband a good wife, nor did she conscientiously fulfil the task she had voluntarily undertaken ; she did not make her home that sanctuary that it ought to become for a happy pair ; she was a poor, weak, foolish wife, and forgetful of her duties. She was very much to blame both for her sorrow and her weakness ; for even when removed from the reach of temptation, a woman requires all the energy of virtue, in order that sin may not find a ready-made path to her heart.

“ Thus Cecilia lived for three years, always anxiously longing for, and always expecting something. She was always in readiness for some surprise ; every time she heard the post-boy’s horn, or a quick step in the next room, she

was ready to faint. She had become pale and sickly ; her bearing was serious and solemn ; her step slow and measured ; her view of life was of the most melancholy description ; and her voice had grown sad and plaintive as an *Æolian* harp.

“ While Cecilia was thus feeding her unhappy passion, Robert had overcome his ; after the one moment of weakness that has been recorded, he never had another relapse. He even repented most heartily having given way to his feelings as he had done, and reproached himself for having saddened Cecilia’s soul, on her joyful wedding day, with the sorrows of the friend of her youth. He mentally asked her pardon with his whole soul for his selfishness, nor could he help blushing at the idea of being, perhaps, thought of by her with pity ; it wounded his pride to be pitied by her. He spent three years in travelling, nor did he travel like a lover who seeks forgetfulness, or for mere pleasure, and for the sake of putting away time, but as a man who wishes to improve. He went forth a mere youth, but he returned home an accomplished man ; he was a hero, for he had learned to conquer himself. Now he felt that he might visit his old friend again, as business brought him to town ; and he determined not to mention the last hour before his departure, and only to allude to their childhood and youth, and the joyous hours they had spent together.

"Cecilia was not at home when he called, and Robert was received in the most cordial manner by the master of the horse, and, in fact, invited to stay in the house; and as the latter was summoned to the prince's presence, he took his old friend into his wife's sitting-room, that he might wait for her return. Robert was alone, and had leisure to examine the sanctuary. His own portrait was placed on a little table, surrounded by flowers. The album he had once given Cecilia lay before it; and several other objects, such as paperwork, books, and occasional gifts that she had received from him, were strewn around. This table seemed to be an altar dedicated to himself. All the other things in the room told of the various occupations of an intellectual woman; and the newest French novels were to be seen on her table.

"Robert was uneasy and pained to the heart at the sight of this room; a whole tide of recollections rushed over his mind, threatening to overwhelm him by their intensity, and he felt as if he must go: yes, go he would, and fly while it still was time to do so. But it was already too late; he heard a step approaching, and in another moment Cecilia entered, little aware of the surprise that awaited her. A scream escaped her on beholding Robert. 'My Robert!' she exclaimed, and sunk almost senseless into his arms. On

returning to consciousness, she smiled, half ashamed of her childishness, and they sat beside each other, talking of the veriest indifferent matters, he of the last stage, and she of her last walk. They said not a word but what they might have said to any one else, and yet both were happy. They never spoke of the wedding day, but a great deal of their youth and childhood. Cecilia's husband appeared as the disturber of all their pleasant recollections, although nothing was said but what he might have heard. A heavy cloud seemed to have spread its gloomy atmosphere over the family circle, and Robert felt oppressed; his heart kept beating, and all the powers of evil that he had repressed with the whole energy of his character, now awoke anew in his breast. Cecilia, in her state of doubtful happiness and failing health, appeared more beautiful, dearer, more in need of protection, and consequently more lovable, than ever. Besides, she was much more accomplished than formerly; she had not frequented the first circles in town, and lived in the very head quarters of the arts and sciences, without improving her intellect. He felt he loved her still, and that she would grow dearer than ever to him, and that he had need oppose the full strength of his principles to those feelings he thought he had overcome.

“ Robert determined to keep back, and to ap-

pear cold ; he ventured seldom into Cecilia's sitting-room, sought for her company less often, and was very reserved, while she, rendered happier by their intercourse, became less reserved, and more cheerful. She had resolved to enjoy the short time of his stay ; to look neither to the past nor the future ; and this plan seemed to succeed. But when at length he began to talk of taking leave, she poured her sorrows into her friend's breast, and complained of her broken happiness, of being tired of life, and of the anguish she endured. He had to comfort her, and to try and raise her courage ; but the more he did so, the more inconsolable and weak-minded did Cecilia appear. Then something was dropped about the pang she had endured on her wedding day, about eyes being opened too late, and about a girl's foolish, thoughtless heart, that was not aware of its own love. He perceived, therefore, that he had been loved — was loved still, and that the wife of his youthful love adored him as he adored her, and that his torments were shared : he acknowledged such to be the case with a mixture of ecstasy and despair.

“ ‘I will go away,’ thought he ; ‘I will fly from her and from myself ; I will not disturb her peace, and she shall not be unhappy on my account.’ He considered the matter over during the whole night, and on the following morning

he told the master of the horse that he was about to depart. Cecilia was so thrown off her guard by this sudden determination, that she lost her senses: the anguish of the threatened separation quite overpowered her. She burst into his room, in her white dressing-gown, and with streaming hair.

“Stay, Robert!” cried she; “stay—I shall die if you leave me. Know that I love you—that you alone can render life endurable—that you are the sun that brightens my existence! I love nothing but you in this wide world, and all the anguish you felt on my wedding day has filled my breast ever since. Stay with me, unless you would see me die!” And with these impasioned expressions, she sunk senseless into his arms.

“When Cecilia opened her eyes again, Robert spoke kindly to her, and assured her that he would remain, just as one promises a sick child anything it wishes in order that it may not cry. His words brought her back to a sense of shame, and she extricated herself from his arms, and stood covered with confusion before him. She had awaken as if from a dream. She now perceived how blindly she had hearkened to her passion, and how improperly she had acted. By confessing her love, she felt she had lowered herself in the eyes of him in whose opinion she would

sain have stood so high. She was still weeping, but her tears were those of repentance. For the rest of that day she was very reserved, and avoided being alone with Robert, though it was to be expected every moment that her husband would guess her secret from the change in her behavior.

“ When Cecilia awoke the next morning, Robert was gone. The following lines were delivered to her:—‘ I leave you, dear Cecilia, after due consideration, because I think I fulfil your wishes by so doing. There are moments in human life when grief or joy gets the better of us, but they must only be moments, and then we return to be ourselves again, and you are now yourself again. You will thank me for avoiding your presence, and some day you will bless me for it.’ ”

Aunt was then silent.

“ Well ? ” said Antoinette.

“ Well ? ” said the lover.

All eyes were directed towards the fair narrator, with looks of eager curiosity. “ Surely this is not the end of the story,” said one.

“ Why not ? ” answered aunt; “ what more is to be told ? The lovers are parted, and the love story is over. What care we whether they live, vegetate, weep, or despair ? whether he enters the service of the state or distinguishes himself in any other way, or whether she sickens or is

well? They are parted, and so there's an end of the story."

But Antoinette insisted that there must be some more of it, or else one might fancy that Cecilia had died, and Robert had consoled himself.

"As far as relates to Cecilia, you will be mistaken, my child," answered aunt; "women never die of sorrow; sensible women become consoled, and virtuous women overcome their rebellious hearts. Cecilia lived through many happy days, and then——"

"Then what?" inquired all the listeners.
"So there is an end after all."

"Yes," said aunt, "Cecilia became a widow."
The sound of a carriage was just then heard.
"Oh! aunt, do go on quick," said Antoinette,
"for there is a visitor, and we shall never hear the end of the story if you don't make haste."

Aunt seemed absent; her color rose as she looked towards the door which had just been opened. A tall, handsome, middle-aged man entered the room; he bowed to the mistress of the house, and then turned to aunt, who came to meet him, and reached out her hand, on which he imprinted a kiss.

"That is the end of my story," said she, turning round to the company with a smile; "that is Robert whom I told you about."

"What! the owner of the neighboring estate?" cried Antoinette, blushing.

"What! Herr von Wallen?" inquired the lady of the house, in surprise.

• "I long suspected that you were the Cecilia of your own tale," observed the baron, "and, as you proceeded, I guessed who the hero was." He reached out his hand to welcome him.

"Yes, dear brother," rejoined Cecilia, "and my tale was only intended as an introduction to the request that my second wedding might also be solemnized here. It will be quieter and more serene than the first."

"Done!" cried her brother, in a joyful tone; "a fortnight hence, on Antoinette's birthday, we will have a double wedding."

"So soon as a fortnight?" cried Cecilia, blushing.

"What you can mean by *so soon*, is past my comprehension," said the lord of the mansion, with a brother's freedom; "I thought you had not much time to lose."

"But we must have time to renew our acquaintance," observed Cecilia; "it is so many years since we have met or spoken to each other. It was only yesterday that my widow's mourning was over; I thought it was improper so soon—"

"I have respected your views on this subject," interrupted Wallen, "but now being so near the

goal of my wishes, I cannot refrain from making my observations. When one has passed one's childhood and youth together, it is no difficult matter to renew one's acquaintance—and, indeed, to make this easier, fair lady, I come here to claim the hospitality of my neighbor for a few days."

"That is right," said the baron, "there is plenty of game, and I think we shall not lack amusement. I know already that you are a capital shot, and my daughter here is ready to confirm it; you have freed her dove-cot of a dangerous enemy."

"Then you know my Robert already?" whispered Cecilia to her niece.

"Yes," answered Antoinette, blushing; "but I never should have dreamt that your Robert could be Herr von Wallen; from your description, dear aunt, I should have fancied him quite different. I think your own fancy must have endowed him with the qualities you mentioned."

"So the wedding is to take place in a fortnight!" cried the baron, and everybody congratulated Robert and Cecilia, and even Stein approached the latter, though in a somewhat embarrassed manner, and kissed her hand, though less ardently than heretofore.

"No, this man can never become Cecilia's husband" cried Stein, one morning; "that is

clearly impossible ! A Nimrod, a mere farmer, who is so absorbed by his worldly interests, that he thinks of nothing but cattle-breeding and agriculture, and does nothing but smoke, ride, and hunt, and who, when the heavenly creature reads poetry to him with her sweet, melodious voice, actually—— No, I can't say what."

" But, dear Hugo," objected Antoinette, " he was fatigued with hunting, and fell asleep ; it was foolish of Cecilia just to choose that moment for reading aloud."

" She was, however, deeply wounded by his doing so."

" Yes, but it was her fault ; how can people be so touchy ? If one loves a person, one must give way a little to them, and not always put one's own will uppermost."

" You are always finding fault with your aunt."

" And you with Her von Wallen."

" Who will go lark catching with me ?" inquired the old baron, popping his head through the half-opened door. " It is a lovely evening."

" Oh, I'll go !" cried Antoinette, " if it were only to release a few prisoners."

Stein thought to himself, " If she would but let me out of the net whose meshes oppress me so sorely." Not that he cared much for freedom either, since he wanted but to exchange his chains for others, and this he knew well enough—yet,

as in duty bound, he took up his hat and stick in order to accompany his intended, when Cecilia entered the room.

“ Does not the baroness accompany us ? ” inquired Stein.

“ No,” replied she, “ I have lost the habit of taking long walks ; it suits neither my feet nor my shoes ; therefore I don’t much care for rural pleasures that are chiefly bodily rather than intellectual, while I like the contrary.”

“ May I stay and keep you company ? ” asked the young man.

“ If your future bride does not object.”

“ If you permit Herr von Wallen to leave you behind ; — only look, there they go arm in arm, so that one can hardly distinguish them in the bright moonshine.”

“ Well, I wish them much pleasure,” said Cecilia, with something like a sigh, as she flung herself into the easy-chair beside the chimney, and began displacing the coals with the tongs.

This was the sixth day since she had renewed her acquaintance with Robert ; a tear rolled down her cheek without her perceiving it, and fell upon her hand. She was frightened at the sight, and hastily looked up at Stein, who was standing silently beside her, and lost in contemplation of herself. She perceived he had seen the tear, and

she wished to efface the impression it might have made.

"Come, now, chatter away," said she, smiling; "you used to be so talkative and full of argument; wherefore so dumb to-day? Are you sad, or is it only a whim?"

"Bad spirits, baroness, are generally catching; you are not cheerful or happy, therefore I am neither."

"And can you have leisure to think of *my* happiness?" inquired Cecilia, in a softened tone: "you who are to be married in a week, and who have before you the prospect of a paradise of household happiness! Oh, no! you have other things to think of than of an old aunt!"

"And whom should I think of with deeper, fonder affection than of her who seems like an angel come down from heaven,—a saint surrounded with a halo of intellect and mind,—and a martyr wearing the thorny crown of love."

Cecilia made a deprecating motion with her hand, that stopped his rhapsodies short. "You have better and more important things to think of," continued she; "first of your love, with its different shades of feeling, and then of getting settled. You must set in order, in your head and heart, the chairs and tables of your future home; you must arrange the drapery of your curtains and *portières*, in your imagination. To a wed-

ded pair all such objects are sacred, as being a part and parcel of their happiness. Yes, if ever man has a right to be selfish and to forget the rest of the world, it is at the moment when the word 'I' includes another self, in order to make a paradise out of this double I."

"A paradise that requires chairs and tables!" exclaimed Stein, with a sigh.

"It matters not," observed Cecilia, "whether one's happiness rests on a cloud or a sofa."

"Yet, notwithstanding, even the happiest union will always be a very imperfect paradise."

"You ought not to express such sentiments, my nephew elect, at the very moment when you have reached the gates of paradise," answered Cecilia, in a reproachful tone.

"Then it is equally wrong in you, my severe judge, who are not one whit further from the said doors than I am."

"I?" cried Cecilia, proudly raising her head, "when did I ever express such thoughts?"

"Not in words, it is true—but in a tear," answered Stein in a low voice.

There was a pause. After a while Stein took up the conversation again: "How will you ever be able to live in the country?" said he; "the occupations of the country no longer suit you, and its pleasures have ceased being such for you."

“How do you know that?” said Cecilia, quickly. “Though I may not like to go lark catching, nor to walk over stubble fields, because my shoes are thin and my feet tender; and though I see nothing poetical in the cultivation of potatoes, turnips, and corn, yet the garden and hot-houses will afford me both occupation and amusement. And though country assemblies, or the visits of the clergyman’s family or of the neighboring gentry, may be tiresome enough, I have books, music, and my pallet, and the long winter evenings will be delightful if Robert likes to share them with me. You can’t think how charming my imagination pictures these evenings. When the curtains are drawn, and the lamp throws a bright light over the whole room, and the fire crackles, and the urn is singing—all is so comfortable, so home-like; not a step is heard on the soft, thick carpet, no creaking boots, no unwelcome visitor, no invitation, rouses us from the happy state where all is so peaceful, so snug, so delightful. If you knew, dear Stein, how I long for this happiness, and for how many years I have longed for it! In town I had everything that luxury, society, amusements, and every kind of so called enjoyments, can give—all but love—and that is what my heart most stands in need of.”

“And will you find the love you stand in

such need of?" inquired Stein, with some emphasis.

Cecilia turned very pale; she gazed at the fire for a length of time, and at last answered, in a nearly inaudible voice—"If I do not meet with it, then shall I be wretched indeed."

* * * *

The lord of Wallen, after his abrupt departure from Cecilia's house, had gone to live on the family estate, which had become his on the death of his parents. Another legacy having increased his lands, he had given up all idea of entering the service of the state, in order to farm his property. He did not cultivate it after the thoughtless fashion of the farmers of the last century; he was a thinking and intelligent agriculturist, who endeavored to come at the secrets and the wants of the soil, and to render it subservient to his intentions. In a few years his estate was worth half as much again, and was celebrated for its good management in the whole neighborhood. His thoughts were continually intent on systems of irrigation and drainage. He worked in God's fields, and he had taken upon him a holy office in the temple of nature; it was, therefore, not to be wondered at that polite literature, with its gardens of sweet flowers, the world and its social pleasures, and the fine arts with their train of

refined enjoyments, should severally have given way to his ruling inclination.

He retained nothing of his youthful days save his love for Cecilia. She dwelt in his soul under the various forms of the child who had played with him, the young maiden who used to dance with him, and the wife of another who had confessed her love for him; he remembered her alike in the simplicity of rural life, and the elegancies of her town abode; in the innocence of childhood, or as the accomplished woman of the world. Other interests had consoled him for being separated from Cecilia, but without blotting her image from his mind. And since the death of her husband, he had written to Cecilia about his love, his wish that she should become his, and his plans for the future. These letters, which she received and answered, were full of matter. Her beloved correspondent seemed always present; and now that he was present, why did he seem so far? How did it come about? Cecilia could not understand what he had accomplished in the space of four years. Yet she took a deal of trouble to try and understand it. He drove her round his estate in his *droschke*; he showed her the black soil that, but a few years back, was so hard and unproductive; then he talked of the harvest, and how much richer it was this year than the last. He had raised himself into a

divinity ; he had worked together with the Creator at the improvement of the earth ; but Cecilia could not perceive the wonders he had performed. Whether the soil were black or brown, it was nothing but dirt in her eyes ; and what were a few bushels of grain to her ? If he had naturalized pineapples and dates in Franconia, then, indeed, she might have said something to him.

On the other hand, Robert often took no share in what interested her. "How will this suit ?" she would sometimes ask herself. And then she would hush up her fears with the assertion that "Love can blend the most opposite elements." But yet she had frequent doubts on the very subject of Robert's love. Was it her own jealous heart that made her fancy Robert's look rested with singular complacency on the blooming Antoinette, and that Antoinette showed such especial friendliness in conversing with him, or accompanying him whenever he proposed a walk ? It was but yesterday that she came in as fresh as a rose, and said to Robert, as she took off her round straw hat, and arranged her disordered locks : "I have just met your flocks, and I congratulate you upon them. How they have improved of late years ! What beautiful wool !" And then Robert gave her such a grateful, friendly smile !

At dessert, too, he always helped her to cut

bread for the chickens ; and he would go with her to feed the speckled inhabitants of the farm-yard. Antoinette was a blooming, merry child of the country, and Robert admired her good-humor, and her full, round, rosy cheeks, and the interest she took in all that concerned his own especial calling.

" After all, there is no love in the case yet," thought Cecilia, whose penetration nothing concerning Robert could escape. On the other hand, she had not remarked how cold Stein had become towards Antoinette, ever since her arrival, and how he clung to herself more and more each day. Cecilia thought only of Robert, and loved him alone ; but she liked to converse with Stein, whose cultivated mind suited her own so well.

Stein had really conceived the thought of breaking off with Antoinette, and becoming united with Cecilia. He was romantic enough to want to apply the figure *changez les dames* in the French dance to the double marriage that was to take place in a week. Stein was headlong in his thoughts, and scarcely anything seemed to him impossible, if one did but sincerely wish it. His position, too, suited Cecilia's tastes and habits much better ; he lived in town, and was only a year or two younger than Cecilia. In short, according to him, nothing stood in the way of his wishes—except, indeed, the trifling circumstance

of the consent of the three other parties. Could these three voices but give the casting vote, four persons might then be made happy---at least, so he thought.

As, therefore, Cecilia had expressed so vividly her longing for a return of love, Stein ventured to say, in a low, trembling voice : " But Herr von Wallen loves Antoinette ! "

He said these words just as we throw a stone down a precipice to ascertain its depth. But Cecilia put her hand to her heart, and uttered a scream. He had given tongue to what she fore-saw. She looked up at him with her large blue eyes, and said : " Is it really true, then ? "

Stein nodded his head affirmatively.

" Well, then, I am much to be pitied," con-tinued she, and sunk into a brooding silence.

" And have you no pity for me ? " asked Stein ; " I shall lose a bride ! "

" You will get over it," said Cecilia, gently, and then was silent again.

" And have n't you a word of comfort for me ? " persisted Stein : " would it not be natural for the afflicted to unite, and endeavor mutually to replace what--- "

" You will console yourself," interrupted Ce-cilia, hardly knowing what she said. She did not understand him ; his love, or a marriage with him, or any other man than Robert, was so far

from her thoughts, that she did not even foresee such a possibility.

Stein had taken his seat beside her ; he seized her hand, kissed it, and held it in his. Cecilia did not withdraw it ; she held her handkerchief to her eyes with the other, and sobbed.

"They are coming !" cried Stein, jumping up, as the sound of talking and laughter was heard in the court, and then on the stairs. Antoinette tripped in as fresh as a rose.

"I have set six poor prisoners free !" cried she, triumphantly ; "they chirped and flew upwards so fast, and, when they were out of reach, they did rejoice so !"

Antoinette only now perceived her aunt's tearful eyes, and Stein's embarrassed demeanor. Unused to dissimulation, she frankly inquired what had happened, while Robert, who remained standing near the door, had seen at a glance, with all the experience of a man of the world, a great deal of what was passing. He was uncertain as to what he should say or do. There are moments when the most resolute of men are compelled to remain passive. Robert thought it was best, for the present, to do as if he had observed nothing, and, after a few trifling observations on the weather and the walk they came from, he left the room. Stein likewise went away. "I wonder,"

thought he, "whether Cecilia loves me, or whether she understood me?"

The two women remained alone.

"Wherefore these tears, my dear aunt?" said Antoinette, kneeling beside Cecilia's chair and taking hold of her hand.

"Have you not cried, too, sometimes, during the last few days?" inquired Cecilia, looking at her niece's eyes with a penetrating glance.

"Oh yes! very often, when Stein neglected me, and was unkind and rough. He used to be quite different formerly, and, as we are to be married in a week, such conduct cannot be indifferent to me."

"And can't you guess why he is unkind?"

"I have done nothing to offend him," replied Antoinette, almost in a huff; "probably I am not witty or learned enough. I cannot tell a story so prettily as you do, my dear aunt; but I think that all women cannot be equally intellectual—and besides, if Herr von Wallen thinks me intellectual enough to like my conversation, surely I am good enough for my lover; for Herr von Wallen is a much more remarkable man than Stein. And, just now, did you not perceive Stein's behavior? Why did he not come to walk with us? Why did n't he wish me good night? No—unless he explains everything, and alters very soon—not later than to-morrow—I won't marry

him at all, and you can solemnize your wedding alone."

Antoinette had been brought up at a school in town, but was only acquainted with town life through the medium of school discipline under a severe-mistress. She had returned to her father's estate in the country with a heart brimful of joy, and the first man she fell in with was Herr von Wallen. He had appeared to her the *beau idéal* of a man, and after he had paid her parents several visits, she assigned him the principal part in the drama of her heart's emotions. Wallen was likewise much occupied with Antoinette for a long while, and had entertained serious thoughts of choosing her for a companion for life, when Cecilia's husband died, and his former love was awakened anew. After Cecilia's first letter, he considered himself bound to her; he had then ceased coming so often to see Antoinette's parents, and being taken up with his altered feelings, his intercourse with her had diminished. It was, therefore, no difficult matter for young Stein to drive his image from her heart. Circumstances, however, now again called it forth, and Antoinette yielded unconsciously to the impression.

Cecilia's eyes rested a long time on the blooming figure that knelt before her. "She is innocently disturbing my happiness," thought the aunt; "Robert's love was the last card on which

I had staked my whole existence, and Antoinette is about to juggle it out of my hand. Shall I warn her of what she is doing? shall I appeal to her generosity? It may perhaps still be time. But no—I will let fate take its own course—a woman must keep her pride, not only towards the man she loves, but even towards her fate."

"Why do you look at me so, aunt?" asked Antoinette, after a while; "what is the matter with you?"

"God preserve you, my child, both from injustice and misfortune," said Cecilia, kissing her on the forehead; "now go, and sleep in peace, for it is getting late."

"Late? why, we have not yet had our supper, and the bell is just summoning us to the dining-room. Come, banish your sadness; you have grown quite silent and pale for the last three days."

"Leave me, child, I don't feel well," said Cecilia, and she remained behind.

Neither did Stein make his appearance at the supper table, which made the baron shake his head in a suspicious manner. "It was all going on so smoothly," said he to his wife, on retiring to their bed-chamber; "and Antoinette was so happy with Stein, when in steps my romantic sister, and sets everything wrong. I wish she had remained in town, with her poetical feelings

and sentimental stories ; they are of no use in the country."

"It is true enough, that an intellectual woman never can be quiet," observed the lady, who, being by no means intellectual herself, was always extremely quiet.

"I know what I'll do," said the baron ; " instead of keeping the two weddings in a week's time, we'll celebrate them the day after to-morrow ; it is best to take people unawares."

The day that preceded this morrow was one of that painful sort on which moral storms seem about to gather. Cecilia had a headache, owing to a sleepless night and the repression of her feelings, and was obliged to keep her bed. Antoinette nursed her ; Robert came frequently to inquire how she was, and the nurse gave him tolerably long bulletins in the next room. Cecilia strained her organs of hearing in order to catch what they were saying ; but the words she heard were quite calculated to confirm her jealousy—flowers, animals, rural fêtes, and so on, seemed to be the theme of their conversations, and not a syllable about feelings.

Towards evening Cecilia sank to sleep, while Antoinette sat by her bed with a book in her hand. The patient opened her lips—"Let there be no marriage without love !" said she, in her dream. Antoinette laid down the book, and re-

mained lost in thought ; at length she rose from her seat, and walked to Cecilia's writing-desk, and having chosen one of her aunt's elegant sheets of perfumed pink note paper, she wrote a few lines to Stein, which she intrusted to the care of Cecilia's maid. Scarcely were these dispatched, when she heard her own name softly pronounced in the ante-room. It was Robert who was calling her, in order to ask once more after Cecilia before he went to bed ; and Antoinette crept out on tip-toe not to disturb her aunt, leaving the door ajar lest the lock should make a noise.

“ She is asleep and dreaming,” said Antoinette. “ There is something peculiar in words spoken during sleep, that has almost an oracular effect on the listener. One would think one's senses would be duller when clogged by sleep, and yet the impression is as if the mind was clearer, and possessed a deeper insight into truth.”

“ And what did Cecilia say in her dream ? ” inquired Robert, on the tenterhook of expectation.

“ *Let there be no marriage without love !* These words stare me in the face, since an hour, just like the great board in our garden, that bids one ‘ beware of spring guns,’ and seem a warning against sin and misfortune. I feel as if I had lived years in the space of an hour, so deeply have I been led to reflect on the subject.”

Antoinette was indeed quite pale and serious.

"And what do you intend to do in consequence of this warning?" asked Robert.

"I have already done it," answered Antoinette, with resolution. "I have written to Stein. I cannot marry him, for I do not love him; nor could I put off my decision any longer; it quite weighed upon my soul. Did I not do right?"

"You did right, because you are a woman; but as for me, honor binds me; I am obliged to wed without loving."

"Good God!" exclaimed Antoinette, "you? — without loving? O, my poor aunt!"

"Poor aunt, indeed!" said a soft, mournful voice by her side, and Cecilia appeared between them in a white dressing-gown, over which she had thrown an Indian shawl, whose soft drapery enfolded her delicate figure. "But you shall not be unhappy, my child, because I am doomed to be so. Robert, you are free from the bonds that honor would not allow you to break; you are free from my love; make Antoinette happy. You love one another; I made out the hieroglyphics of your feelings, because my own taught me to understand them, and my heart was nearly broken in the task."

Cecilia trembled as she joined their hands, and while they sunk into each other's arms in

an ecstasy of delight, she tottered back to her room, and laid herself down on her bed.

The old baron was in the habit of smoking with his future son-in-law and Robert every evening after the ladies had retired. The preparations for next day's wedding had been carried on quietly, and when Robert went away to ask after Cecilia, the lord of the manor could not keep his secret any longer in his bosom, but unfolded it to young Stein. The latter handed him Antoinette's note, which ran thus:—"Let there be no marriage without love! I have discovered that we do not love each other; it is well that we are still both free. Be happy without Antoinette."

"Short and plain!" cried the baron, very much provoked; "what the deuce has turned the little witch's head? It must be my sister, with her high-flying romantic notions."

He hastened to Cecilia's chamber, and reached the ante-room just as the first embrace was taking place near the window.

"Give us your blessing!" cried Robert, as he entered, "and then nothing will be wanting to our happiness."

"Yes, papa, then we shall all be happy!" exclaimed Antoinette. The happy pair did not hear the low sobbing in the next room, but the baron had heard it as he passed the half-open door.

"And Cecilia?" inquired he.

"Cecilia loves Stein!" said Robert, emphatically; for he was convinced that her giving him up so quickly could only be accounted for on these grounds.

"And Stein loves Cecilia!" asserted Antoinette; her frequently wounded vanity having led her to hit on the truth.

"Then we can still have a double wedding!" cried the baron, highly delighted with this exchange, that fixed his daughter in the neighborhood, "and the ceremony shall take place to-morrow."

"What! to-morrow?" cried Robert, exultingly.

"So soon as to-morrow?" murmured Antoinette, blushing; and once more the happy pair embraced each other, and everybody retired to rest.

On the following morning Cecilia sent Antoinette a chest full of presents; her own *trousseau* was added to the wedding gifts intended for her niece, and Antoinette was much pleased with everything. Cecilia was busy preparing for her departure when Stein sent in his name, requesting to see her. The room already looked bare, and had no longer that comfortable appearance which Cecilia so soon imparted to any four walls that she happened to inhabit, by means of books,

flowers and cushions. Stein would fain have spoken to her alone, but the lady's maid was present, and Cecilia never thought of sending her away. Cecilia looked so pale that she scarcely appeared like a woman with a heart full of tumultuous beatings and ardent sensations, and one whose mouth was made to be kissed ; and yet he was come to make her a declaration of love. He was obliged to speak French on account of the presence of the lady's maid.

“ We are both left alone,” said he ; “ will you not go through life in company with me ? ”

Cecilia turned her large eyes upon him, with a cold, serious, yet inquiring look,—“ I do not understand you,” said she, in the toneless voice of one awaking from a trance.

“ Be mine—and give me the hand that but a short time ago you were about to bestow on another. That other did not love you,—but I, Cecilia, love you ! ”

Cecilia held her handkerchief to her eyes, and motioned him away, with the words—“ No ! never ! ”—and Stein hastened away. His carriage was soon heard driving out of the court.

In a few hours Cecilia's carriage was packed, and the horses only were waited for. Cecilia would not spoil the wedding rejoicings. Antoinette hung on her neck, and sobbed. “ Dearest

aunt," said she, "what a sad end is this to your pretty love story!"

"Did I not tell you, at the same time, that love is like a variegated soap-bubble, which bursts but too easily at the cold touch of the outer world?"

"But to think that it should be I who destroy your happiness! I fancied you loved Stein, and had purposely taken him from me."

"Did I not tell you that many lies are woven into the web of love; that it displays a thousand falsehoods, like the chameleon; and that it is difficult to distinguish between truth and invention?"

"But your love story was really a holy picture, painted in the truest colors, and I believed in it."

"Always believe in really true feelings, my child; the holy picture still lives in my heart too, only the cobweb that connected it with the outer world is torn."

"Woe to me! I snatched hold of the delicate threads as mischievously as a child."

"Do not dash your happiness with any self-reproaches, my child, and let me go forth into the world, which has nothing left to offer me. Let me return to society—I am accustomed to its solitude of the heart!"

"And Stein?" inquired Antoinette.

"Stein's lot is cast in a different path to mine ; I might appreciate and understand him as a transient acquaintance, because I generally find out a jewel let it be set as it may ; but as to love—oh no !—Stein's male vanity quite deceived him in that respect— but Stein will console himself."

"You will die of grief, aunt !" cried Antoinette, sobbing aloud, as the travelling carriage drew up, and Cecilia turned towards the door.

"Women do not die of grief, as I lately told you," answered the latter, solemnly, "and I shall not die either ; give me but time to be myself again, and then you shall see me once more—perhaps consoled."

Robert lifted Cecilia into the carriage. Since he had seen Stein depart, and had learned that Cecilia did not love him, he was deeply struck by her generosity. She appeared to him like a saint, because she had been able to give *himself* up. He did not know, it seems, that without his love he could be nothing to her, and that she only loved him on account of his love. What she mourned over was his extinguished passion, on the eternal duration of which she had founded her whole happiness.

When Robert took hold of her, and lifted her into the carriage, she trembled violently, but she did not look at him. "Drive on !" cried she to

the coachman. Antoinette sobbed violently for half an hour on Robert's bosom. The sound of music woke her at length from her sorrow. It was the peasants of Robert's estate, that came, amidst the strains of merriment, to fetch the bridal pair—and Cecilia was forgotten.

BLIGHTED HOMES.: A TALE.

Gillies, Mary Leman

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1849; American Periodicals

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BLIGHTED HOMES.

A TALE.

BY MARY LEMAN GILLIES.

“FOR Heaven’s sake do not grumble!” were words uttered in a tone which expressed a sorely oppressed heart. The speaker was a young man, dressed in a fustian suit of working clothes, which though coarse were clean, and could not disguise a fine form. His countenance was mild, grave, and open; his voice deep and touching, possessing those inflexions which belong to strong feeling and a certain degree of cultivation. The woman beside him was a little compact creature, with a pretty face, and piercing black eyes; particularly neat in her attire, and quick in her movements, by which she was every now and then in advance of her companion, whose steady, equal pace knew no deviation.

These people were husband and wife, and were returning home together in discourse more earnest than agreeable—one of those events which, in the fluctuations of trade, from time to time occur—a reduction of wages—had tried the temper of the one, and touched the feelings

of the other. George and Martha Robinson had been six years married. Their union had been a rare combination of love and prudence; her early thirstiness had enabled her to bring many substantial comforts to their home, and George, if less provident, had obtained a character for integrity and skill which secured him a preference among employers. They had one child, nearly three years old, and to superficial observation presented a domestic compact of peculiar comfort and enjoyment. But we must lift the veil. The sources of happiness lie not with externals: it needs no moralist to tell us how inadequate is wealth to its production — how little the glitter of the diamond enlivens the breast on which it glows. In the home of George Robinson, those moral gems, order and cleanliness, had a setting; they were so predominant as to be apparent at a glance, and a stricter observation would have disclosed an admirable system of economy and habits of industry. These were Martha's great requisites, and it is scarcely possible to overrate them; but she deteriorated their value, often nullified their power, by moral deficiencies, — deficiencies of those qualities which, though taking rank among the minor essentials of character, are daily items in the account of life that sway the balance to enjoyment or misery. "She wanted gentleness of spirit, kindness

of temper, and amenity of manner. In the days of her petted childhood, in the brief courtship which had preceded her early marriage, her pertness had been regarded as wit, her youth and prettiness giving a passport to much that was reprehensible and repulsive. It was thought that her exuberance of spirit and acuity of humor would become subdued and softened by the sobering cares and soothing duties of domestic life. Such did not prove to be the case. The disposition to perceive deformity rather than beauty ; to censure sooner than praise ; to find out the faulty instead of the fair side of everything, and to extract bitters rather than sweets, which had once been exercised in a wide circle of family, friends, and neighbors, gained strength in the concentration it experienced after her marriage. Every little mole-hill annoyance grew, from her manner of viewing it, into a mountain grievance, nor when passed away was it forgotten. No moment was so calm in which her caprice might not raise a storm or revive one ; no entreaties to let "bygones be bygones" would avail, and often had George Robinson occasion to exclaim with Solomon—"Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices and strife."

On learning the abridgment which their means had experienced, she had instantly launched into

a flow of words which tortured her husband's mind, and urged him to utter the adjuration just quoted, but she continued her painful and fruitless expiation till they reached home. With a slow and sad step, George entered: had the inner man possessed resignation to the present and hope for the future, which a complacent companion might have easily infused, how might he have shut the door of his dwelling upon the angry world, and realized a little Goshen of his own, for the scene was all neatness, brightness, and sweetness; but without the moral charms of cheerful, tender lovingness, it was but the naked trellis wanting the flowers it was fitted to sustain.

The fire had been carefully made up; a gentle stir, and it threw about the room a blaze which glanced upon the well kept furniture, the quiet carpet, and the curtained windows, while the open door of the adjoining apartment gave a glimpse of the bed with its nice hangings, the child's cot with its white coverlet; turn his eye where he might, the order essential to comfort was apparent, but did not dissipate the desolate feelings planted in his heart. He sat down by the fire, leaned his elbow on his knee, and his head on his hand. His attitude expressed thoughtful melancholy; Martha looked at him, felt a conviction that he was unhappy, and was

not insensible to a sympathetic regret ; had she gone to his side, put her arm about him, and said — “ Dear George, look up, this will pass away and soon,” he was the very man to have responded to such cheer, to have seen sunshine behind the cloud ; but it was her unhappy habit to rouse him with a sting. Gentleness of manner she was apt to characterize as affectation ; expressions of tenderness and attachment as hypocrisy, and thus habituated herself to the reverse.

“ I don’t see,” she exclaimed, with a harsh, cutting tone, “ the use of your sitting moping there — putting your dirty feet on the fender — you’d take better care had you the keeping of it bright.”

With that she untied her bonnet strings with a twitch and turned into the next room. The sharp sound of shaking the dust from her shawl ere it was folded, the abrupt push given to the box in which her bonnet was replaced, were all unnecessary discords, spoiling the moral harmony of her best habits. She returned to the pretty parlor tying on a clean white apron ; her cheek was rosy, her hair smoothly braided, her cap, an effort of unexpensive ingenuity, all freshness, and thus, the very type of niceness, she threw a snowy cloth upon the table, on which she made arrangements for supper worthy of a

home of higher pretensions ; but her movements were ungentle, her aspect ungracious, and thus all these pleasant proprieties were robbed of the atmosphere that could alone give them brightness and warmth.

George, under the effect of the homeward scolding, had not spoken since he came in ; he merely looked up, on her briefly telling him if he wanted beer to go and fetch it, and rising he took his hat and went out. He had not proceeded inany steps before he overtook and fell into talk with a fellow-workman. The latter was in a state of great excitement ; he had just left his home under the influence of strong disgust and excessive annoyance from his wife, a slatternly woman, and he sought relief by indulging in violent invective against her, declaring, with an impetuous oath, his determination to spend half the night at the public house.

“ I ’ll just show her,” he continued, “ that if she won’t make comfort for me at home, I ’ll make it for myself abroad.”

“ No, no,” expostulated Robinson, “ you will only make bad worse — you ’ll take too much and spend too much, Walker !” He added, putting his hand on the shoulder of his companion — “ Bessie is a soft, gentle creature — a woman full of kindness ; and, oh, God ! what a blessing

must that be! Take my advice, Walker, and go home."

"Home!" he repeated. "What have I to go home to? There's no fire; the children are all up and squalling; everything at sixes and sevens — in fact, the whole place in an uproar. No, if *she* likes to live in a den I don't, and what's more I won't. She'll drive me to something desperate — an untidy, slipshod hussy!"

From this brief interview Robinson returned home with new feelings; the excitement and interest that Walker had created had roused him from the condition of morbid feeling to which he had yielded. He placed the bright pot, with its head of foam, upon the table, and with a fresh eye, as if he then scanned them for the first time, looked upon the appliances to comfort that surrounded him. The room was at the moment vacant, his survey was therefore uninterrupted. His face brightened as he gazed upon the little panorama. During his absence, his slippers had been put before the fire; his house jacket hung on the back of his chair; on another, his clean linen for the next day airing — all spoke the kindness of a woman who yet could rarely utter a kind word. His heart, at the moment full of her merits, from the contrast that had been forced upon his consideration, would, had he obeyed the impulse of his natural character, have led him to seek her

and given warm expression to his feelings; but they had been so often checked by her coldness or reversed by her contradiction, that a second nature had supervened, producing habits of reserve and self-restraint. Yet under the existing stimulus he could not quite restrain himself, but going towards the next room, he leaned against the side of the doorway, and said cheerfully—“Come, Patty, *I* am ready for supper.”

“Are you?” she replied. “Then you’ll have it when it’s ready for *you*—so just wait till you get it.”

Thus repelled, for her voice was more harsh than her words, he stepped back, but, try as he would, he again felt his spirits ebb. He stirred the fire, drew the table closer to it, and strove to feel indifference. In the midst of this she appeared, seated herself at the table, helped her husband, but forebore to partake of anything herself. She had a sullen satisfaction in nursing her wayward humor, and knew from experience that it was apt to fly off under the social influence of a repast.

Robinson looked at her clouded face and felt exasperated. He put down his knife and fork, pushed back his chair, and exclaimed—“Now what is the matter with you?”

It must be recollected that Robinson was not only angry but hungry, and the state of physical

sensation has no small influence upon the moral feelings; perhaps his wife was not without sharing this uneasy state of stomach; be that as it may, his tones struck jarringly on the quivering chords of her excitable temper; she replied with her usual petulance and flippancy. Words are a generative family — one begot another — and to bring the quarrel to a close, Robinson seized his hat, resolved to leave the house. Determined to prevent his egress, Martha threw herself between him and the door; a struggle ensued; he pushed her from him; she stumbled back, and falling over a footstool came violently to the ground, striking her head as she fell against the fender.

In an instant, terror and tenderness supplanted rage in his breast. He raised her; the color had forsaken her face, and some drops of blood were trickling from her forehead. After hurried efforts to revive her, he laid her again gently on the floor, and flew to alarm his neighbors. These, with medical aid and the police, were soon in the place, and the night closed with the wounded woman in a severed bed, and her husband in the cell of a station house.

It was an agonizing night to both. Robinson, though aggrieved, felt now as if he had been the aggressor, and with the generosity that often belongs to strength, he blamed himself for the rash

violence he had exerted towards so delicate a creature, and made a thousand resolves to let her have all her own way for the future. Martha, on the contrary, (really less hurt than was apprehended,) bewailed her injuries, vituperated her husband and his sex, till she learned that he had been taken charge of by the police. Any *real* danger to him ever turned the whole current of her feelings in his favor, and absolute force was necessary to prevent her seeking in person to obtain, by self-accusation, his immediate release.

This event terminated like many of a more aggravated character that disgrace the history of some classes of our people; George was liberated on bail, and afterwards, on the candid acknowledgments of his wife, acquitted. But, indignant at the public degradation to which, for the first time in his life, he had been exposed, the circumstance made a deep impression on him. The slightness of the injury to Martha removed all his deeper feelings of regret, and her unchanged habits effectually stemmed the flow of his returning tenderness. Affliction has its freemasonry: Robinson and Walker became confederates under the sympathetic influence of a common grievance — unhappiness at home. The neglected wives grew into gossips upon those fertile topics — the faults of each other and

of their respective husbands; for each acutely felt her peculiar griefs and distinctly discerned her neighbor's error. Bessie Walker, while bemoaning her own domestic misery, would exclaim — “No one can wonder at the change in George Robinson — such a vixen as Martha would drive any man mad!” While Mrs. Robinson, amid a resentful sense of injury from neglect, was florid in reflection on the bad management and disgusting carelessness of poor Bessie. It was the old story of the mote and the beam, the miserable effect of want of self-examination and reflection.

But every moment bears the seed of change — the present is passing away, the future unfolding. Where there is not moral progress, there is moral deterioration; there is no safety but in an unceasing endeavor at improvement. The woman who does not help to build a husband's fortune assists to pull it down; the union that is not marked by moral progress proceeds and closes in moral misery. The arrears of the domestic duties make a dread account, and Heaven help the moral bankrupt before whom they are laid!

On a summer evening, somewhat more than twelve months after the little incident of the station house, Martha was seated at her window busy at her needle, when the sound of the drum and fife, and the tramp of feet, induced her to

drop her work into her lap and look out. She saw the recruiting serjeant, who had been for some time located in the neighborhood, passing with a band of recruits. Among the usual crowd on such occasions, one group arrested her attention ; it was a staggering, haggard-looking man, with a shrieking woman clinging to him — three or four little children were hanging about her, and adding by their cries to the clamor. A glance sufficed to show Martha that this was the unhappy family of the Walkers, and a shiver of instinctive sympathy attested her strong feeling at the spectacle they presented. The passionate tenderness and touching tones that gushed from the lips of the distracted Bessie every now and then fell distinctly on her ear, till the efforts of the gathering neighbors prevailed, and the exhausted wife and her weeping little ones were removed. The band again fell into order, the music grew louder and merrier, and Martha looked at the men to see if among the serjeant's prey she might discover any other of her neighbors, when, bringing up the rear, she beheld Robinson. With a slow, sad step, a pale cheek, but a melancholy resolution in his bearing, George came on ; as he passed his own dwelling, he raised his dejected eyes and met those of his wife — a momentary and expressive gesture with his hand seemed to say — “ It is all over ;

better cut the knot I cannot disentangle ; I have done it, and farewell !”

When she recovered from the stunning effects of the sight, she rushed to the bed of her sleeping child, and wrapping it up, went forth with it in her arms, conscious that it could plead for her in a manner that she could not plead for herself. Thoughts like lightning passed through her brain as she hurried along to the place where the military party had halted. The hour of parting, like the power of death, yields a background, upon which the object about to be lost stands forth in peculiar brightness. All the hitherto unestimated qualities of George Robinson blazed upon the perception of his wife, and her own faults and deficiencies took a dark array beside them. Charities uncultivated die out, or fall into abeyance, often lying so dormant that the stir of strong events is necessary to revive them. Why, why will any leave the heart thus fallow, for the harrow of death or sorrow to quicken it into only unavailing fruitfulness !

George and Martha met and parted, with deep and tender feeling, with renewed consciousness of the early love that had first brought them together, and of the individual merits by which each were distinguished. At that moment, Martha (for with her our moral mostly rests) saw the errors that had marked her course, the faults that

had deformed her character and spoiled her happiness. Had the considerations condensed into that brief space been spread through her previous life, allotting to each day some little portion of appreciation of the present and reflection for the future, how different had been its course and its now probable close !

George had folded her and his child to his heart ; he had blessed them, and left the larger portion of the bounty money that had helped to bribe him to the trade of blood — for it was at a period when the wild work of war was rife ; and with such solace as these could yield, she returned home.

Home ! what was it to her now ? A desert, from which the stir of life, the spring of action, had departed. She sat down amid that scene — so changed, yet still the same — and wept over the bitter review which it suggested. Oh, now to hear that approach which she had so often met with indifference or unkindness ! Her child woke — woke with her sobs and the falling of her tears upon its face. It looked up with the bland, open expression which it derived from its father, and, kneeling in her lap, clasped its little arms about her neck. What a lesson ! Nature, that gentle teacher, uttered no reproach. It said, “ Come back, thou erring one ; consider thy ways and be wiser.”

New scenes and trials opened upon the unhappy men who had rashly abandoned their homes, and social duties. They joined their regiment, and soon trod the shores where the genius of war was shaping the different destinies of Wellington and Napoleon: for the one, laurels and longevity—for the other, exile and the double canker that devoured mind and body. Sorrows at home had made Robinson and Walker companions; hardships abroad made them friends. Mutual sympathies, common recollections, and struggles, drew them together when the weary day, which had seen them plunging into passes or tangled coverts—toiling through deep ravines or over rugged mountains, harassed, worn, and wasted, came to a close, they cowered over the bivouac fire together, and were more often in communion on the past than engaged upon the present; for, with the clingings of a failing man, Walker would continually revert to home. Long before he had left it, he had yielded to habits of intemperance, which now told against his constitution, and Robinson was called upon for much exertion in his behalf, which, with his characteristic generosity, he kindly made. They were among the gallant band that covered the retreat of Sir John Moore, and in the march from Lugo to Be-zantos suffered severely. In twelve days they had

traversed eighty miles of road in two marches; passed several nights under arms in the snow of the mountains; and were seven times engaged with the enemy. Walker had day by day lost strength: the want of shoes and the bad weather had aggravated the difficulties of the way, and on the evening of their reaching Bezantos he declared he could do no more—could go no further. The rain that day had fallen for six successive hours, and in a splashy spot, with his head resting on a stone, he lay down. All the troops passed on—but one. Robinson remained beside his broken-down comrade, heard his last prayers, his last wishes, as in that final hour his thoughts flew to the home he should behold no more! The struggle was brief: he called on God and died! The weather had calmed—the sky cleared—the moon broke forth, and, covered with her light, Robinson left the cold remains, with a sad satisfaction that the poor fellow had laid his burden down and was at rest.

After the battle of Coruna, in which Robinson was wounded, he was among those who contrived to escape to Portugal, and there joined the remnants of regiments which were afterwards embodied and fought at Oporto and Talavera.

Martha's life, from the day of her husband's departure, had been one continued praiseworthy struggle against the infirmities of her nature and

the assaults of fortune. By means of industry, frugality, and some aid from early family connections, she managed to preserve her home undeteriorated, and to rear her child worthily. Poor Bessie, with less energy of character and elevation of purpose, sunk into successive stages of degradation ; the scarlet fever robbed, or, perhaps it might better be said, relieved her of her wretched children, and she was received into the workhouse. But even there the redeeming power of good at last asserted itself : her patience and kindness of nature made her a good nurse, and the blessing of the very old, the young, and the sick, were with her.

Little Matty Robinson was eleven years old when the sad news came that her father had fallen at Talavera. It came upon her mother like a blight. The morning and the midnight prayer had been breathed for *his* return ; the chief object of her daily toils — her self-denial — her self-discipline — to build up happiness for *his* latter days.

“ Oh,” she exclaimed, “ can it be ! Is it possible that we are to meet no more — that he will never see what I have made his child — what I purposed to make his home ? Have I sorrowed for him — have I loved him in vain ? ”

Among the motives for resignation presented to her, was the probability that he might have

returned a wreck, which she could not have borne to behold.

"No, no!" she said; "lame, blind, a beggar, he would be welcome to *me*—dearer to *me* than in his brightest days!"

Beautifully is it said, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning!" and truly that "the darkest hour is just before dawn." Even while Martha's passionate words were being uttered, a broken-down and disbanded soldier was making towards the town; and before the morning had ripened to mid-day, George Robinson was once more in his bridal home—had clasped to his heart the wife of his first affection—had wept with proud joy over his child.

The moral of our sketch is sufficiently evident: we are all unapt to place a sufficient value on the good in possession, or sufficiently to use or economize the means of happiness. Did we look into ourselves and our position, each would find much lying dormant that might be available for enjoying and dispensing good: to none does this remark apply more than to wives and mothers. The woman who holds in her own right, moral worth, gentleness, and kindness, is an heiress endowed by God; hers is the holy power to sustain the good man, restrain the aberrating, and reclaim the bad. As a MOTHER, who may

place limits to her power, or to the range which the spirit of good which *she* implants may take?

“The life of every being is the well-spring of a stream, whose small beginnings are indeed plain to all, but whose ulterior course or destination, as it winds through the expanse of infinite years, only the **Omniscient** can discern.”

H A V R E.

BY LEITCH RITCHIE.

ONE of the nymphs of Ceres, whose name was La Seine, was one day amusing herself with gathering shells on the sea-sand, and running away with cries of sportive terror from the huge waves that sometimes broke over her feet. While engaged in this manner, the nymph Heva, whose province it was to watch over her beautiful friend, lest she should meet with the fate of Proserpine, saw suddenly a blue robe floating on the waters; and, soon after, the white locks and purple face of Neptune rose above the surface.

La Seine, startled by a wild scream from the lips of Heva, fled towards the bank; but the god, enamored with the beauty of her bashful fear, and the elegance of her unstudied motions, shook out the reins of his hippocampi, and bounded after at full speed. Already had he overtaken the breathless fugitive; and already was his hand extended to seize her, when with a loud shriek she invoked the aid of her father, Bacchus, and her mistress, Ceres, and at the instant she melted into

water, beneath the grasp of the god, and became a river, that still loves to wander through the haunts in which she delighted while a nymph.

Heva died of grief, and the admiring Nereides built her a monument of white and black stones, on the side of a steep, which retains her name to this day ; while Amphitrite, indignant at the infidelity of her spouse, hollowed out a bay near the spot, to serve in all future times as a sure Havre (harbor) against the fury of Neptune.

Such, if we believe the dreams of the tender and graceful Saint Pierre, was the origin of Havre : I would recommend the sceptic (provided he hath music in his soul) to betake himself to the heights of Ingouville, what time the mists of morning or evening twilight are hanging over the sea. There will he behold the identical veil of the nymph of Ceres, undulating upon the emerald waters ; and there will he shape out of the shadows of distance the mantle of that old sea-king

“ Floating many a rood ”

upoh the waves. His mind, filled with images of physical beauty, will be led into their moral associations ; again will he find himself a denizen of that antique world in which the dead forms of nature were animated by the spirit of poetry ; and again will he feel his heart grow young in the old faith, and think

"That still from Jupiter, whate'er is great
Proceeds ;—from Venus, everything that's fair."

When he has descended, however, from these heights of Ingouville, where the good taste of the English has built themselves a little city of exile, the bustle and industry of a great maritime town recall him to the realities of the present world. He finds that Havre was not founded by Amphitrite, but by Louis XII.; and not from jealousy of Neptune, but of the enemy. The port of Harfleur was fast filling up with sand, and a town of defence being necessary at the embouchure of the Seine, Louis laid the foundations of Havre in 1509.

His son-in-law, Francis I., continued the works with more spirit ; and in order to signalize at once the new town and himself, constructed there a vast ship, called *La Grande Françoise*, which he destined to combat the Turks. The principal mast of Mademoiselle was about six fathoms in circumference ; and she carried her own chapel for the celebration of mass, a tennis-court, a smithy, a windmill, and numerous apartments, and after all had room for two thousand tons. It may be conceived what a sensation a beauty of these dimensions made in the country, and what eagerness of curiosity was manifested as the moment approached when, like a croco-

dile hatched in the sand, she was to be plunged into the element for which she was destined.

The moment did come—but *La Grande Françoise* would not stir. In vain the shipbuilders swore and coaxed by turns, buffeted her with their axes, and raised her up with their levers—*La Grande Françoise* could not stir. Even as the Vicar of Wakefield's picture was too large to go in, so she was too large to go out; and there she lay, a sign and a wonder to the time—a mockery of human ambition, and a monument to herself.

Havre became gradually a place of great importance, till at length the first consul made use of this remarkable expression:—"Paris, Rouen, and Havre are only a single town, of which the Seine is the main street." Before his visit, the unhappy Louis XVI. had entered the town amidst showers of flowers and cries of enthusiastic welcome. The following well-turned compliment was inscribed on the door of the custom-house:—

"Protecteur du commerce et des arts des Français,
Respecté sur les mers, adoré sur la terre,
Louis, en acceptant un impôt nécessaire
Ne reçoit en tributs que pour rendre en bienfaits."

Napoleon and Marie-Louise came in their turn, and the empress queen determined to gratify the Havrais by catching a fish (if the gods should make her so lucky) with her own imperio-

royal hand. Down dived the so-honored hook and line at one end of the boat, and down dived (secretly) a cunning fisherman at the other, with an immense fish between his teeth. Marie-Louise was successful. She fished up the fisherman's fish, to the joy and wonder of the spectators, and the diver received fifty pieces of gold for his ingenious gallantry.

Havre is one of the most agreeable of the English haunts in France. The new streets are clean, and even handsome; and the Place, in which there is an elegant theatre, gives an imposing air to the town. The view conveys an accurate idea of the quay where the steamboat adventurers land, and comprehends the space from the custom house to the *Hôtel de Ville*.

KATE OF KILDARE:: A WIFE'S TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

Gillies, Mary Leman

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1849; American Periodicals

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KATE OF KILDARE: A WIFE'S TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

BY MARY LEMAN GILLIES.

IN a sequestered spot near Kildare rose a rambling pile of buildings, which had in times past possessed some importance as the abode of a wealthy squire; but falling, like the family, into decay, it had been successively consigned to humbler and humbler tenants, till eventually George Dighton opened it as an inn. Hither he brought his wife and little girl, Kate, their only surviving child. Severe trials, acting on constitutional delicacy, had shaken the mother's health, but through years of decline the placid energies of a thoughtful pious mind sustained her, till just as Kate had attained her tenth year the struggle closed amid duties unremittingly fulfilled, and Mrs. Dighton was committed to the grave with regret from all, and grief to her husband and child of no common bitterness. Her peculiar character had breathed upon their existence a charm, of which, while loving her devotedly, they had nevertheless been little conscious, till they felt the blank desolation to which bereavement left them. They had lived in the

perpetual presence of her serene cheerfulness and provident care for their comfort, as do the dwellers in fine air, who, full of light spirits and placidity of mind, neither know nor inquire their source, till transferred to a heavy atmosphere and dim horizon, their oppressed nature pleads against the change, and they learn what they have lost.

The care and tenderness of her father cherished and developed the fine nature Kate inherited from her mother. Education at the period of which we write was of small account, especially in the class and country in which she was placed; but Kate was taught to read and write, was well skilled with her needle, and the neatest dancer that ever stepped. She had ripened into a beautiful creature, and reached her sixteenth year, when her father formed a second marriage. Her step-mother brought with her a son, a fine, dark, athletic youth, who had just completed his majority. Robert Horrey achieved what many had essayed in vain — he won the heart of Kate Dighton; the parental sanction was not withheld, and all seemed to promise that "the course of true love" would, in *their* case, "run smooth." Suddenly, however, a quarrel occurred between the mother and son, in which Mr. Dighton took part with his wife; thus the domestic peace, of late so perfect, was broken, and the hopes that grew out of it marred.

Late in the evening of that stormy day, a young creature of agile movement might have been seen gliding about the outbuildings, looking forth into the deepening twilight, now from this door, now from that. The moon seemed toiling through masses of heavy vapor, but at intervals gleamed forth upon the fair anxious face of Kate, for she was the watcher; at length she descried an approaching form, heard a well-known step, and then a low-toned voice, which said — “Be not afraid, ‘tis I.” The speaker drew her arm within his, and they passed into an adjoining coppice.

Each had sought the interview confident of power. Kate of the power to soothe and reconcile; her lover to win her and bear her away. The gentle girl was no match for the self-willed, impetuous being resolved on her possession. In vain she counselled submission to his own parent, and forbearance regarding hers. The filial duty with which her breast was filled found no place in his.

“Kate,” he exclaimed, “my mind is made up. I go hence to-night; *how I go depends on you.*”

“Oh, Robert, dear, what is it you mean?”

“What is it I mean?” he repeated with fervor; “why, that you must go with me. If I leave you here, surrounded as you are, I lose you — if I lose you I care not what becomes of

me. Hear me — trust to me — I have planned and prepared all. I have friends to aid — a priest to unite us ; the car waits to carry us to him, and thence to Dublin, whence in the morning we may embark for England or America."

Pale, motionless, almost breathless as a statue, she stood and listened to him ; at length she exclaimed — " Robert, Robert, what madness is this ? Do you think I can so leave my father — leave him in his old age ? "

" I see — I see," he impatiently exclaimed, moving proudly aside, " I have deceived myself. You care not what becomes of me. You can at such a time as this coldly abandon me ! Your father — he is not alone and abused — *I* am. Your father — he has friends, a wife, a home — *I* have none of these. *I* am deserted, insulted, forsaken."

His tones searched her heart. She sprung to him, and caught his arm with convulsive energy ; she could not speak, but her silence was eloquent of tenderness.

" At least," he said, returning to the gentleness of entreaty — " at least, consent to be mine — give me, ere I go, the certainty that no other shall possess you."

His persuasive impetuosity prevailed. A little while, and Kate was seated by his side on a car, followed by three or four of his friends on horse-

back, for if a rescue were attempted he was resolved upon a desperate resistance. Before midnight they alighted at the obscure dwelling of the priest, situated in a lonely glen, and there, surrounded by strangers, the pale and trembling girl became the bride of Robert Horrey.

“Now,” she whispered, as soon as the ceremony was over, and she bowed her head upon her husband’s bosom, “let us away — restore me to my father’s roof before morning — let us not lose a moment.”

Robert made no reply. Nothing was further from his purpose than to part with her again. He wrapped her mantle round her, held a cup to her lips of which he made her drink, lifted her into the car, and resuming his place by her side, they drove rapidly away, she knew not whither. To be brief, the morning found them in Dublin, and Kate convinced that every other tie was severed, and her fate forever linked with Robert’s. She wrote to her father, not to criminate her husband and excuse herself, but to ask forgiveness for both. This was the first step on the path of sacrifice on which she had entered. Her father’s reply reached her just as she was embarking for Holyhead. His letter breathed pardon, prayer, and blessing, and wetted with her tears she refolded it, and placed it in her bosom

with a sweet superstition that it held a charm against every ill.

It is not in a sketch like this that the eventful life of Kate can be followed out in detail. Her constituent characteristics were energy of mind, and tenderness and firmness of affection. She loved her husband with perfect devotion, and notwithstanding many dark shades in his character, he had some fine qualities to attach her. Unfortunately one of those clever fellows who might be anything, he was really nothing, or, what is equivalent, "Everything by turns and nothing long." His great passion had been for horses, and he inherited a few hundred pounds; this money had been the source of his quarrel with his mother, who desired its appropriation, in part at least, to the liquidation of debts for which she had in some measure become responsible. But he was more disposed to go forward on the path of apparent advantage than to tarry or turn back to acknowledge or repay past benefits. Perhaps he appeased his conscience by deeming this only a postponement, and promised himself that a time should arrive, when, fortune being realized, he should become just, and even grateful; but that till then, under the pressure of his peculiar circumstances, he might give up principle for expediency, and grasp at everything that promised self-advantage. We shall see the

wisdom of his philosophy. His means of living gradually settled into that of an agent for the sale and purchase of horses, and the employments which are contingent upon and incident to such a path. But circumstances rose out of it of a dangerous tendency to a mind so lax, and a temper so impetuous—it introduced him to society above his grade of fortune, and as deficient in moral principle: the seductive influence of gambling was at work; betting transactions, now fortunate, flattered him with unexpected success—now the reverse, plunged him into embarrassment. The ready refuge of the unreflecting, or those who dare not reflect, was at hand, and the glass, which a genial nature might have taught him to list as a stimulus to friendly communion merely, was often snatched to drown the gnawing consciousness of past error or approaching ruin.

During all this time Kate had a large share of affliction. Her husband, of a jealous temper, and surrounded by promiscuous and questionable associates, anxiously secluded her in a remote suburban residence: with all his faults he loved her ardently, and respected in her the virtues he failed to act up to himself; ill, therefore, could he bear to expose her to the temptation and deterioration which were rife around him. But amid the storms of the life he led, she was often

forgotten, left to endure solitude, sometimes privation. The irregular and extravagant man's home is in general the first sacrifice; legitimate claims are postponed in favor of the illicit demands which *will* be heard, and for which the criminal claimants know so well how to force attention from the hopes and fears of the weak and wicked defaulter. Periods of deep sorrow had, nevertheless, ever brought Robert to his wife; the death of her father, the successive loss of three children in their infancy, and the occasional illness of their first-born, who, though inheriting that fatal malady, consumption, had survived — had always found him a ready and tender sympathizer. Still, except in great emergencies, Kate was alone. What floods of thought and feeling swept through her soul as she sat beside the bed or chair of her drooping girl, reviewing the sudden wrench by which she had herself been torn from every prop her childhood and youth had known, to be surrounded by circumstances of struggle and difficulty. It had been like taking the swan from the sequestered lake and giving to it the course of the sea-bird. How will it bear the alternation of sunshine and storm, and preserve its pristine beauty in both — how adapt its wing to its devious way? Kate yielded eminent proof of the wonderful elasticity seated in a spirit of large capacity and strong

affection. Well was it for her that she was one of those whom the severe atmosphere of adversity braced with strength, for how did the termination of the twelfth year of her wedded life find her? Alone—in destitution—and worse than widowed! Her misguided husband had fallen into the toils; tried and convicted of horse-stealing, he was transported for life to Van Dieman's Land.

We will not pause to dilate on Kate's suffering and heroism: how she stifled the agonies of her own spirit, and endeavored to call up hope in his heart, while it died in her own. When all was over—when she had seen him for the last time—she returned home, and casting herself upon her knees, she poured forth her spirit, but in no selfish supplications. She prayed for him who was soon to be upon the wild waters, to pass, a branded outcast, to an allotment, the stringency of which she could not know, but which her imagination clothed in the darkest colors: she prayed for the innocent sufferer lying before her in feverish and fitsful sleep—and for herself, what did she ask? *For strength to do her duties.* Life for her child, reunion with her husband—these were the boons she implored; and that power might be given her to assist the healing of the one, and to work out the redemption of the other. She rose full of pious confidence and

patient courage. Her first care now was to gain some employment that would afford them bread; by her needle and laundry work she effected this, but only in a partial and uncertain way, intervals of compelled inaction at times consigned her to the severest want.

She had struggled through twelve months, and no word of tidings or consolation had reached her from the wretched exile. One day she was kneeling beside her child, urging upon her the necessity of taking some nourishment, for her failing appetite began to refuse all food. What, under these circumstances, were the mother's means? Will wealth, will luxury, believe it? Three halfpence. Ere the poor invalid had gained power to reply, the sharp rap of the postman startled them. Kate ran to the door; she saw a letter in his hand — she knew the writing of the superscription — it was her husband's. (Some one had brought the letter to England, and posted it in London.) She trembled — she changed color — she held forth the little sum she had in her hand —

"This is all I have in the world, but *let* me have the letter — it is from" — utterance failed her, and she burst into tears. The postman took the halfpence, put the letter in her hand, and departed; but in an instant he rapped again.

“ And is this indeed all that you are worth this day ? ”

“ ALL,” she replied.

“ Then Heaven forbid that I should take it from you ; ” and thrusting it back into her hand he hurried away.

Robert’s letter was read and re-read by both mother and child amid convulsions of feeling. Its tone was contrite and tender. Kate saw in it evidences of improved character, and her soul yearned to be beside him, to strengthen his better purposes. Gradually the emotions so fondly indulged subsided, and she thought of the kindly being who had brought her a letter so precious, so consolatory. Having obtained the means to meet the little debt, she watched for him the next day, and many following days, but in vain. Humble life is a quarry full of facts, (the details of the present story are strictly such,) and these facts are pregnant with evidence of the high qualities of human nature. Fastidious refinement, revolted by repelling circumstances, refuses to look into it : the habitual denizens of the scene behold self-denial and self-sacrifice as matters of common occurrence, and know not the moral value they bear. But who that can compare and reflect, but must pause at the spectacle thus presented. How does starvation every day go forth in this great city, amid all the temptations which

trade can devise to allure luxury and invite expenditure, and urged to no outrage, return to its squalid covert to eat its unpalatable crust in patience, or in like manner bear its utter privation ! How will honest independence and the domestic affections reject the wretched and degrading refuge which is all that society will extend to the reproachless poor, to die in the pangs of destitution, but with the feelings of the heart and home yet round them !

At last Kate and Howard, the postman, (he was worthy of the name he bore,) met again, and an acquaintance grew up. He soon appreciated her character, and sympathized with her sufferings, and these, in a nature like his, induced exertion in her behalf. He gained her the notice of a charitable society, through the means of which the closing weeks of her child's life were furnished with some comforts, and when death had set the seal on her sufferings, afforded the mourning mother requisites for the last sad duties.

Kate was now indeed desolate. The being who had filled so large a space in her heart, given motive for so much exertion, was gone ! All her desire, all her hope now, was to make her way to Hobart Town ; but how to accomplish that ? The humble philanthropist, Howard, listened to her wishes, and pondered with almost

parental kindness the means to realize them. One evening he appeared with a cheerful smile, and a newspaper in his hand. He pointed out to Kate an advertisement—it was for a young woman to go out as nurse and attendant to an invalid lady returning to the colony.

“Go,” said Howard, “tell your story in your own simple way. I know something of Mr. Beaumont, the party advertising—the lady mentioned is his wife. His father was an old master of mine, and got me the place I hold in the post-office.”

Kate felt a prescience that her path was plain before her. She was not mistaken. Her truthful earnestness, her ingenuous aspect, had their effect: her humble friend had not overrated his power or her own—Kate was engaged for the voyage. An application to her step-mother gained her the means of an humble outfit; and once more hopes akin to happiness dawned upon her. The elements seemed resolved to spare one who had met so many moral storms: “a fair wind and a flowing sail” bore her on through a prosperous voyage; and a fine autumn day in the beautiful month of March saw the good ship come to anchor in Sullivan’s Cove.

Few who had known Kate in her brilliant, joyous youth, would have recognized her in the placid, self-possessed woman, who landed that

day in Hobart Town; still fewer would have guessed how powerful were the feelings silently at work in her breast as the time grew near for meeting the lover of her youth, the husband of her heart, for whom she had sorrowed and suffered so intensely.

Mr. Beaumont made it his first business to inquire about Robert, for the sake of one, who, in the short period of five months, had established herself in the esteem, and entitled herself to the gratitude, of those she served. He was pleased to find him among the men employed by his own firm: the pleasure was, however, damped by the mixed report he gained. Horrey was described as a man not without his merits, but as one not to be depended upon. With a charitable trust in the force of improved circumstances, and renewed association with his reproachless wife, Mr. Beaumont brought them together. Unhappily, Robert Horrey was already involved in fatal associations, which began to develop themselves soon after his reunion with Kate. Investigation was at work, and detection, though slow in following upon his delinquency, was only too sure. The joy, the hope, that visited her heart was of short duration. A second time she beheld her husband arraigned as a criminal: his trial was a searching one, and his sentence was deemed severe. But, as a superior man among the pris-

oners, he had met encouragement and indulgence ; the abuse of these advantages had deepened the die of his offences, had denied justice any ground for mercy, and sentence of death was pronounced upon him.

This blow appeared to crush the wretched culprit ; he was conveyed back to prison as if paralyzed. Kate succumbed but as it were for a moment ; there was a regenerating power seated in her high purposes, and infinite trust in divine support, which pierced even the dense darkness round her. It is remembered how she immediately sought the governor, and when denied access to him, passed the night on the steps of the door of Government-house, and in the morning won her way to his wife. There another triumph was reserved for Kate ; her indomitable perseverance, her peculiar character, and irreproachable conduct, prevailed over every obstacle — the governor's heart yielded to the pleadings of his own wife and the wife of the criminal, and the sentence of death was commuted to banishment to Norfolk Island — an island lying on the east coast of New Holland, and reserved as a place of punishment for the worst class of male convicts.

The Beaumonts, with the commiseration and respect for Kate which her circumstances and character commanded, offered her an asylum in

their service, but she declared she could enter into no engagement that might interfere with what was now her great object—to join her husband in his last wretched exile. In vain she was assured that it was a scheme impossible of realization—that no woman had ever been admitted to the place, and that existence for her there would be unendurable. She proved that every obstacle was destined to fall before her untiring energies—she memorialized the authorities, she assailed every avenue by which pity could make approach to power, and at length was allowed to proceed to Norfolk Island. A residence of five years there made her the mother of two children; now it was that she found herself compelled to choose between conflicting duties. The moral life of her offspring depended on removing them from a scene so unfitted for their opening perceptions. It was enough for Kate to arrive at a conviction of what she *ought* to do; this was the fulcrum of the resolute will by which she accomplished so much. She came back to Hobart Town, and by employment as a laundress obtained support for her children: but amid her maternal duties and daily toils, he who filled the first place in her heart was never forgotten, and in an interview with Mr. Beaumont she avowed, that to see Robert once again at home and happy, was still the vision and the

hope, the purpose and plan, of her life. The unconquerable character of her attachment, and the triumphs it had achieved, checked the incredulity with which, in any other case, Mr. Beaumont would have received such an idea; but he had learned to look upon the humble woman before him, so meekly ignorant of her own magnanimity, as chartered by her virtues to hope where all others should despair, and unexpectedly he found himself in a position again to give her aid.

Mr. Beaumont was appointed to a commission of inquiry into the state of Norfolk Island. On his arrival there, it was among his first objects to inquire out Robert Horrey; he heard he was an altered man — he soon saw he was a dying one. Representations, backed by certificates from the medical man, and sustained by powerful and universal advocacy drawn from sentiments of admiration and regard for Kate, were successful — when Mr. Beaumont returned to Hobart Town, he brought Robert Horrey with him, and with what he had left of life and strength, the wretched man found refuge with his devoted wife.

For a time he rallied — to behold himself once more in the secure shelter of his home, beside that creature who, through “bad report and good report,” had unchangeably clung to his destiny;

and to see his little children at his knees, to feel the babe which Kate had borne to him since they last parted, on his bosom, created a powerful reaction. The springs of his better nature gushed forth, as if to refresh and purify the heart, the pulses of which were now numbered — to regenerate the spirit which was soon to pass from time and trial forever. One month after their reunion, Kate received his last sigh. There was no violence in her grief; her sorrow was as serene as the hopes that soothed it. "Now," she said, "there is but one more journey for me. He cannot come to me, but I shall go to him. When Robert and I meet again, we shall part no more."

LIFE BEHIND THE COUNTER; OR, THE DRAPER'S ASSISTANT.

BY MISS CAMILLA TOULMIN.

“ We do too little feel each other's pain,
We do too much relax the social chain
Which binds us to each other ! ”

L. E. L.

CHAPTER I.

“ SEND away the tea things, Mrs. M., it is past seven o'clock; Herbert must have dropped in somewhere, I am sure,” was the exclamation of Mr. Markham on a certain winter's evening, as, crossing his slippers before the fire, he returned a large silver watch to its stand on the mantel-piece, and drew from his pocket the evening paper.

“ Aunt,” whispered a gentle voice on the other side of the room, “ may I ask Jenny to save the tea-pot, in case Herbert should not have had either dinner or tea? I know he is gone about a situation; he took down the particulars of two or three advertisements this morning.”

“ You know, Alice, the servants — ” Here, however, Mrs. Markham's speech was cut short by a ring of the bell, so we can only surmise

what the remainder would have been. Herbert had returned; but before he is introduced to the reader, let me say a few words about his uncle and aunt, the present host and hostess of himself and his sister.

Mr. Markham was what is called one of the most "respectable" men in the city, and that emphatic word comprehends a world of properties. He was in the grocery line of business,—his shop situated in one of those narrow, crooked streets, the tall houses of which, it is said, (if not swept away to make healthy openings and modern improvements,) may still outlast the buildings of to-day. In that house had he begun business; and in that house Mr. John, his only son, married and taken into partnership long ago, now resided; his "respectable" parent having of late years preferred the luxuries of a morning and evening ride in his one-horse chaise to and from his suburban residence. It is not worth while to say on which side of London this was chosen, for the suburbs have a strong family likeness, differing only as much as rich and poor relations may do. They all have their Minerva Terraces and Belle Vue Cottages, and now-a-days Albert Roads and Victoria Squares. They all, too, have their little-great people, from the reigning beauty, whose Sunday attire sets the fashions of the place, to perchance some county

magistrate or *ci-devant* lord mayor, who is looked on as a second Solon, providentially sent to enlighten the world. Trifling as such weaknesses seem, at which we are all inclined to smile, grave mischief arises from them; for almost all our social evils arise from a want of that extended sympathy, which, stretching over the barriers of *class*, should communicate good — like light — without being impoverished, nay, multiplying it rather, as by reflecting mirrors. Now the system of *cliques*, whether they be of the witty or wealthy, or of the little-great people of a suburban neighborhood, strikes at the root of all this. It hedges a little party round with a thick stone wall, impervious to mortal sight, while the melancholy part of the affair is that the poor deluded prisoners think their dungeon is the world. Mr. Markham's world consisted of the people with whom he transacted business in the day, (he always dined with his son in town,) and the two or three neighbors they visited; but as they all belonged to the same *genus*, I do not think he ever knocked out a cube of his wall, through which to take a peep beyond. His only daughter, an elderly young lady of about thirty, and his wife, completed the home circle, to which his orphan nephew and niece had lately been introduced.

The father of Herbert and Alice had been a

very different character from his elder brother. He had been a music master in a provincial town; and though early left a widower, had brought up his children in much respectability. But so precarious did he know such a means of existence as his own to be, that it had long been the wish of his heart to establish Herbert in trade. Of his brother he knew little else than that he was a prosperous man; and when he found that an illness of some standing had assumed a dangerous turn, it was a very natural thing to leave his children to the guardianship of his only relative, and two hundred pounds, the savings of a life, to his care till they should be of age. Mr. Markham considered that the only sensible wish "poor Charles" had ever expressed was that Herbert should be a tradesman; it met his cordial approbation; but as for advancing any of the two hundred pounds for apprenticesing him, he should do nothing of the kind. The youth was nearly seventeen; let him get a situation which would "lead to something." Alice, who was three years her brother's senior, was equally desirous of independence; and perhaps the fondest hope of both their hearts was that they should not be separated. Yet they both knew that there were few situations in which this would be the case; therefore was Alice proportionally grateful when she heard

from Herbert, on that eventful evening, the cause which had detained him so late. He had found employment for himself and sister as assistants in an extensive drapery establishment; nothing remaining to be settled except Alice seeing the parties, and the necessary reference to their uncle being made.

What a benevolent dispensation of Providence it is, that youth soaring aloft on the wings of hope and expectation, and looking at life as it *will* look through its own brightly colored imagination, should find in its own untried spirit the strongest weapon of defence against the world with which it must wrestle! How else could the suffering youth of this great metropolis, not counted by tens and by hundreds, but by tens of thousands, live through their fearful course of slavery, in numbers sufficient to make at last their deep-toned cry audible. Alas! alas! we take no account of the myriads who have sunk after their term of suffering into the crowded sepulchres or the dense city. And yet how great a thing is every human heart, with its little world of hopes and fears, its warm affections, its trusting faith, its bright imaginings! And how desolate, indeed — desolate as the last survivor of a world's wreck — must that one be who hath not some dear ones to mourn and rejoice with him. So desolate, that I would fain believe the earth

counts them by units; and least of all do I believe they would be found among the struggling and oppressed, for such have warm sympathies. But this is a mass of misery, past, irrevocable, though good for us sometimes to think on; there is another picture yet more painful, because more present to our sight, and more disastrous in its results. The myriads who do not die, but purchase a lingering life by the sacrifice of health for its remainder; or worse still, the myriads whose minds are warped by evil training, and then in their weakness are corrupted by overpowering temptation—who are themselves made selfish by cruel oppression, and whose tempers are irritated (catching the infection beyond all cure) by the endurance of constant acts of petty tyranny! Reader, is this a digression? Nay, only a dirge ere we drew up the curtain.

The establishment of Messrs. Scrape, Haveall and Co. was situated in one of the principal thoroughfares of London. From small beginnings it had grown into an “immense concern;” over the squares of plate glass, each of which was as large as a moderate sized dining table, which formed the shop windows, ran a line of figures, intimating that five houses had been taken in, namely, from 70, — street, to 74, inclusive. Brussels carpets and gilded mirrors adorned the interior, showing to advantage the

gorgeous fabrics — here suspended in graceful festoons, there in studied but apparently careless disorder, again in massive heaps — conveying altogether an air of wealth and profusion, that might make the heart tingle with a just pride at the power, energy and resources of our princely merchants. But Messrs. Scrape and Haveall required — to cut their satins, measure ribbons, fold shawls, and perform duties of the like kind, innumerable as are the stars of heaven — nearly one hundred assistants ; mostly young men and women between twenty and thirty years of age, though a few of them had passed the latter period of life, and some — Herbert and Alice Markham for instance — were still in their teens ; and the heart turning to such blighted youth forgets wealth and splendor.

It was towards the close of a May day — bright May, when the hedgerows are sweet, and the hawthorn in blossom ; when even the dusty lilacs in the London squares put forth their pale flowers, and the smoke-begrimed sparrows twitter their merriest note. But the large rambling shop of Messrs. Scrape, Haveall and Co., with its long straight counters, and winding ways, where the houses taken in joined one another, was redolent of anything rather than spring flowers. The atmosphere formed by so many human breaths being of that close, unpleasant

character which makes the buyer of a yard of ribbon exclaim, even on a winter's day, "How pleasant to get into the fresh air again!" Walking up and down the shop, occasionally speaking in courteous phrase to a customer, and often reprimanding an assistant, was a man of about forty. It was not that his features were irregular, but there shone through them so cold and hard an expression, that every one would have called him an ordinary man. He walked with a shuffling gait, and it might have been observed that he wore a peculiar sort of gaiter, the better to support and conceal the bandages it was necessary to wear. For as linendrapers' assistants are *never* allowed to sit, except during the few minutes in which they snatch their meals, swollen legs and absolute disease are the quite common results of fourteen or fifteen hours' standing; and this is a low average to what is and has been!

This superintendent, or shop-walker,—hardened into a tyrant by the wrongs of his own youth,—was speaking to a lady near the door, when Alice and Herbert chanced to meet, without either of them being at the moment engaged in waiting on a customer. They were at the further end of the shop, and instinctively withdrew a few paces till they brought themselves behind a pile of goods, which shielded them from

observation. To converse in business hours, even if there were nothing to do, was a forbidden pleasure ; nevertheless, it was indulged in for a few moments, especially as it was evident Alice had been weeping bitterly.

"No, no, not for myself," said she, in answer to his inquiries ; "it is that you should have acted their falsehoods as I have seen you do to-day."

"What have you seen me do ?" replied Herbert, his face flushing, and yet in a tone of voice that implied a resolution to brave out aught he had done.

"A poor trick ; a lady wished some silk — it was not that what you showed her was too inferior for her taste, but it was not dear enough, in her opinion, to be good ; you saw this — you feigned to fetch another piece, but you only cut that in half, and added a shilling a yard to the price."

"And suppose I had not done so, she would have left the shop without purchasing."

"Well ?"

"Do you know why poor Martin was dismissed so suddenly last week ?"

"I did not hear the reason exactly ; — impertinence, they said."

"A refusal to do such things as these ; and by a perversity of fortune, thrice in one day, per-

sons who spoke to him went away without buying."

"But, Herbert, wrong cannot come right," returned Alice, raising her earnest, tearful eyes again to his.

Herbert put his hand affectionately upon her shoulder, and was about to speak, when an angry voice, crying "Markham—Mr. Markham, where are you?" quickly separated them; yet was it a moment they could never forget; a seemingly trifling incident, like many we can all bring to mind, that take fast hold of the memory whether we will or not. In reality, it was the moment in which the sister felt that the influence—the sort of affectionate authority her three years' seniority had hitherto given her—was over. The chain of habit was broken; she could now only lure to right by soft persuasion or bright example. Yet one had overheard their discourse, and had read both their hearts, by that intuitive knowledge of human nature which genius gives. For genius lived and had its being in at least one noble heart behind that counter; genius of that high order which makes its possessor the pioneer to a promised land, even when meeting, as more or less such minds so often do, with scorn and ingratitude; forming as it were the living angle of a wedge, that makes the opening, to die perchance in achieving it.

“If we can get out by half-past ten to-night, will you take a stroll with me?” said William Howard to Herbert Markham, an hour or so after the conversation of the latter with his sister, to which I have just alluded.

“Why, I don’t know—I am sure,” replied Herbert in a hesitating manner; “I half promised to go with some of them to a shilling concert, and to supper afterwards.”

“You had better change your mind,” returned the other; “a walk in the fresh air—say across one of the bridges—will do you much more good, besides costing you nothing.”

“Oh! I don’t mind a few shillings.”

“I know that; but I wish you would come with me instead; I really want to speak to you.”

It seemed that William Howard could always have his will, when he took the trouble of trying for it. And yet none of them could account for his influence, although many felt it. In person he was slight and fair, with a high forehead, shaded by soft brown hair, which, though he could not have numbered more than eight and twenty years, was already streaked with white; his eyes were of that changing color which so frequently belongs to genius, and which might be called chameleon grey; while, alas! the hectic cheek and frequent cough told a tale of suffering to those who could read such signs.

Herbert scarcely knew how it was that he had been so easily persuaded to give up the concert ; yet, certain it is, that towards midnight he found himself inhaling the pure air from the river, instead of the vitiated atmosphere of a crowded room. Moreover, he was enjoying the conversation of his companion extremely ; perhaps, too, his vanity was a little gratified that Howard — whom he soon discovered to be no ordinary person — should think it worth while to converse with a youth like himself so seriously ; for they had, in fact, become quite confidential, and they spoke of their mutual hardships with the freedom of friendship. They stood on Waterloo bridge, the slanting shadow of whose arches was thrown distinctly on the rippling waters by the bright moon above, as it seemed to rend asunder every now and then the fleecy floating clouds. There was a hush, a repose about the scene, affecting even to the most careless, after the fatigue, and noise, and feverish hurry of the day ; while north and south, and east and west, arose the darkening masses of domes and dwellings, and above them the lurid glare which, once observed, is always recognized as the reflection of London's myriad gas lights.

“ How wealth and poverty neighbor one another ! ” said William Howard, after a pause ; “ and yet they are unknown to each other, and

have worlds more widely different than thousands who dwell in different hemispheres. *This* is the mischief,—the intense selfishness which, having no faith in a governing Providence, will plan and purpose for its little self, according to its little knowledge, getting entangled in an inextricable manner in its vain efforts to work out truth from a falsity, ‘right’ out of ‘wrong.’ It is this fearful selfishness, this want of human sympathy, that is the canker stretching through the social chain, even to the sufferings of you and me.”

“Perhaps;” replied Herbert, but half understanding his companion, and yet deeply interested in their discourse; “but how is it to be cured? I have heard politicians say it is easy to discover a fault, but often very difficult to remove it.”

“By working a different problem,” returned Howard, without attending to the last observation,—“by working *from* right, whithersoever it may lead, instead of struggling after happiness by the cross roads which have no connection with it. It is by moral influence—no other force—that the suffering must have their wrongs redressed. The light will come—the dawn is already apparent.”

“Is it true that you write poetry?” said Herbert;—a strange rejoinder, yet not *mal-a-propos*.

William Howard smiled as he continued — “ I do not call my verses by so dignified a name. Strange that to those who find no such channel for their thoughts, the effort seems extraordinary — to me it is so natural. But, Herbert Markham, it was not to talk of poetry that I asked you to walk with me. I have lived in this world — and a beautiful world it is — ten years longer than you have ; will you listen to me, and hear my advice, as if I were an elder brother ? ”

“ That will I, and gratefully, ” said Herbert with real emotion — for he felt the reverence, and yet elevation, we most of us experience when brought into communion with a superior mind.

“ You are surrounded by temptations — strong ones I grant, if you look not beyond the present moment — but I entreat you yield not to them. Independent of your own loss, in choosing a path that must lead to ruin, remember that it is by showing ourselves worthy of liberty that we slaves shall become free. Every falling off of an individual is a backward step for our fellow-sufferers. Already a small body is organized, we meet often ; will you add another voice, another unit, to a little party who, working out their principles in the light of religion and morality, hope confidently to bring about a better order of things. ”

“ But I am so ignorant,” exclaimed Herbert ;
“ what can I do ?”

“ Only at present be worthy — and yield not to the vile trickeries which disgust while they degrade.”

“ And do you never,” replied Herbert, with real astonishment, “ and do you never name two prices, or sell faded articles at candle-light, or soil things to make them seem a bargain, or — ”

“ Never !”

“ And yet have been seven years in the house !”

“ At first I suffered severely, and was fined half my salary for my indiscretions ; for the list of finable offences was even longer then than it is now. But by one of those consequences — I will not call them accidents — which follow us on the right path, in some unlooked-for manner, it has happened that once I was the means of preventing an extensive robbery ; and that three of Messrs. Haveall’s best customers have for years insisted on being waited upon by myself — these reasons, I believe, induce them to put up with my ‘ folly ; ’ and I tell you again there *is* a little band who will not lend themselves to these vile trickeries.”

“ And yet for seven years you have not bettered yourself. It is a hopeless prospect.”

“ *Think of doing right ; and the bettering for*

all of us will come. But speaking in a worldly point of view, others who have followed the plan have been benefited personally by it; for I need scarcely say that those who resist this sort of temptation are not likely to fall into the habit of seeking bad company; and the very money they have saved from the gulf of idle dissipation has enabled them to start in business for themselves."

"And you — why not you?"

"I am still poor — for I have my dear mother to support."

"What is it your little band are struggling for?" returned Herbert.

"To procure an alteration of existing customs, by which our time of daily labor may be reduced to twelve, or, as I say, ten hours daily. I am satisfied it only remains for our wrongs to be known for them to be redressed; but the evil has grown so gradually and stealthily, that habit has accustomed the world to its frightful reality, and, slow to change, it cannot at first understand the miseries of this monstrous system. Even those who are the greatest sufferers, the most ruined in health and degraded in mind, are often the last to stir for their own relief. In fact, the movement is taking place among the few whose establishments are conducted on upright principles towards their customers, and humanity to their servants; for, my young friend, we have

the sanction of *some* employers on our side, and honor and gratitude are their due. It is our individual misfortune to be under the control of narrow-minded masters, who have not even the understanding to feel the cruelty they are practising ; the men who always clog the wheel when social advancement is intended. And this is to be accounted for easily, I think. But come, promise me that you will be one of us—if only for your sweet sister's sake—promise !”

“ I do ; and I will pray to God to help me keep such promise. Howard, I shall never forget to-night ; but there, you are coughing again ; is it well for you to be out so late ? ” And as they walked away from the bridge, the deep tones of St. Paul's boomed forth the midnight hour ; while William Howard's continued cough measured time—the mortal term of his life—in a manner as significant !

CHAPTER II.

Three months passed away, changing bright, flowering May to fruitful, golden August. Not that the different seasons, indeed, were much perceived in the establishment of Messrs. Scrape, Haveall and Co. ; unless it were that the more balmy the air, or inviting the day for out-of-door enjoyment, the more crowded was the shop, and the later was it kept open ; and when at last it

was closed, there were the goods to put away,— so that it was no unusual thing for the jaded and worn-out assistants to see the dawn before retiring to their yet more crowded dormitories— whence to arise, in three or four hours, with wearied limbs and aching head, to fulfil again the sad routine of their unvaried life. Yet though the glad sunshine, or the perfumed summer breezes, made little difference to Herbert and his companions, a change, a something to be felt rather than described, had taken place in the establishment; or perhaps I should say, in a small division of it—for Howard, and the few who listened to his advice, formed, after all, a very decided minority. Yet it was remarkable that these few were the most respectable and best-conducted individuals in the house; and, moreover, the chief favorites with regular customers, who naturally prefer being waited on by some one in whom they have confidence.

It may have been guessed that Alice Markham possessed a stronger mind, and more fixed principles, than her brother; perhaps it was so, or perhaps his youth may be pleaded as an apology for the one act which had caused her so much pain—for in three years, at their age, the mind takes a great spring. However this might be, William Howard soon found that in Alice Markham he had met a kindred spirit— one who in a

righteous cause would play the martyr, either by action or endurance. But why lengthen the tale? — could they speak with earnest reasoning, and exchange high thoughts with glowing enthusiasm, without perceiving that their hearts were growing one? And in the joy and glory of a pure and passionate love — *health and life*, and a few hours in the four and twenty for *social intercourse and mental improvement*, seemed more than ever worth a struggle. So greatly had poor Alice suffered from the fatigue consequent on such unreasonable hours of attendance in the shop, that William Howard persuaded her to petition for employment in the rooms, where, needlework necessary in making up things for sale being done, she might sit a portion of the day. It is true that this arrangement deprived them of opportunities of exchanging many a cherished word; but in all human probability it saved the life of Alice — we shall see presently for what.

It was the custom of Herbert and Alice to spend a portion of the Sunday with William Howard and his mother. The three usually attended church together, and then taking a walk — for fresh air in the parks if possible — made the humble dwelling of the widow their halting place for the day. Sometimes, but not often, Alice and her brother dined by invitation

at their uncle's; and on one remarkable occasion a postscript was added to the note of invitation, intimating that if they liked to bring with them the young friend they had so often mentioned, he would be welcome.

Mr. and Mrs. Markham had invited a new apprentice of the former (with whom he had accepted rather an extra premium) to meet their young visitors, all of whom they received with feelings of hospitality, decidedly strengthened by the pleasant consciousness of patronage. Even the elderly young lady, their daughter, had thought it quite worth while to deck herself in smiles, and put on her most becoming dress. What little kindnesses will kindle gratitude in affectionate hearts! Never had Herbert and Alice felt so much regard for their relatives as from their courtesy they did this day, tracing even in the "nice" dinner of salmon and lamb which had been provided, the thought of their gratification. The consequence was that their hearts were opened, and they conversed with much less reserve than usual; and certain topics at last were started, on which William Howard spoke with the earnest enthusiasm which belonged to his nature.

"O dear!" said Miss Markham, who, having lately adopted ringlets, affected with them extreme juvenility,— "O dear! it would be such a

pity to shut up the shops at dark—it would make the streets look quite dull, I declare!"

"But, madam," replied Howard, "if you think of the tens of thousands who would be made happy by such a custom, the lives that would be preserved, the health that would be retained—and, more than all, the moral advancement which must result from a moderate time being afforded for reading and mental improvement—"

"Oh, sir," said Mr. Markham, very decidedly, "I don't see what apprentices and assistants want with reading. It would fill their heads with a parcel of nonsense—that is all."

Howard colored deeply, yet he continued with much self-control—"I do not say that it is desirable that such persons should become what are called 'literary'; but I hope, Mr. Markham, you will agree with me that some taste for reading, some desire for mental cultivation, must form the best safeguard against habits of idle dissipation; whereas a body jaded and worn by fifteen or sixteen hours of anxious toil, disinclines the mind for action, and tempts too many to seek a momentary stimulant. I may well say anxious toil, for a situation has been known to depend on an assistant persuading a customer to buy an article for which she had no inclination."

"Yes," said Mrs. Markham, "you do plague

one dreadfully. I do declare there is no getting out of a shop without buying."

"Aunt," said Alice gently, "I think the mischief is the system of falsehood it teaches — oh, if you knew the things I have heard and witnessed."

"You should not tell tales out of school, niece," exclaimed her uncle; "every trade has its tricks — that I know."

"More is the pity, though!" said the grocer's apprentice, growing alarmingly bold from the treason to which he had been an attentive listener. There was no verbal answer, but Mr. Markham darted a fiery glance around, which, however, only Alice read correctly; while her aunt again spoke, saying —

"Besides, sir, how could servants and many others, who are engaged all day, make their purchases if the shops were closed at night?"

"I imagine, madam, that under such an arrangement mistresses would allow servants the liberty of going out for this purpose in the day. It has even been argued that it would be an advantage to such persons, inasmuch as they would escape the liability of being imposed on by candle-light, or of purchasing an unsuitable article by accident, and would be less likely to be tempted on occasions to spend their money foolishly, than from the facility they now have

of doing so at all hours. At least, this is the manner in which we meet this common objection; but it certainly rests greatly with those who are free agents, who can purchase at what hours they like, to exert the great influence of example by doing so at early hours."

"It seems to me, young gentleman," replied Mr. Markham, "that in all your arrangements you leave the master's interests entirely out of the question."

"Not so, I assure you, sir; for they would reap many advantages in possessing a superior set of servants, who would have better health, and more alacrity to serve them;—besides, the system of early hours once established, purchasers would make their arrangements accordingly. They would choose the articles they require, early in the day—not go without them; and the result would be active occupation during the hours of business, instead of, as is often the case, only the appearance of it; for we are ordered to seem busy whether we are so or not. Oh, sir, if you only knew the misery and mischief which have gone on for the last thirty years, accumulating and progressing, you would see the necessity of a change."

"No, I do not see it," returned their host, "and I disapprove of this discontent among young people, and beg to hear no more of it.

Young people must take their chance and work their way, as others have done before them."

Yes, in as mortal danger of life as the soldier on the battle-field — (*for this is the computed, ascertained fact*) — from breathing foul air — from want of sufficient rest — from continued over-exertion — from hurried and irregular meals, and frequently improper food ; and in the peril of mind and morals which must result from the systematic teaching of much falsehood, and the absence of all leisure for establishing religious principles — for cultivating the intellectual nature, and enjoying the healthful influence of social intercourse. But Mr. Markham, who spoke thus, considered himself a person of strict principles, and above all, of business habits — so that he thought it his duty to apprise the governing powers in the establishment of Messrs. Scrape and Haveall, (they had lately given him a large order for grocery,) that they had a dangerous rebel in their house. The next day William Howard was discharged !

Again three months have passed — changing now golden, glowing August to dull November.

In a very humble dwelling were assembled, one Sunday evening, William Howard, his mother, and Alice Markham. An open Bible was on the table, from which the latter had been

reading aloud, until the gathering tears stayed her voice, and she paused; her listeners knowing too well the reason of her silence to ask it. Alas! William Howard was now a confirmed invalid; — anxiety of mind on losing his situation, and probably, a cold taken in going about seeking another, had completed the work so long begun — the fiat was gone forth — consumption had marked him as its own. He knew the truth, and was resigned to the will of God; not with that dogged, hardened, brute courage, which may meet death unflinchingly, but with that holy trust in His mercy, that while the heart feels the dear ties of life, it has yet strength to say meekly — “Thy will be done!”

“So you think, dear Alice,” said Mrs. Howard, making an effort to change the current of all their thoughts, “you think that Herbert and yourself will obtain situations in the establishment we were speaking of, where they close at seven o’clock? — blessings on them, for having the courage and humanity to set such an example.”

“I have no doubt of it,” said Alice, trying to speak cheerfully; “for they only wait to see Mr. Haveall — and whatever evil may have been going on in the house, he cannot accuse us of participating in it. Ah, William, what a happiness it must be to you, to know that your influ-

ence saved Herbert from becoming as false and unworthy as so many of his companions: and I — oh! how much do I owe you!"

William Howard was scarcely allowed to speak, for the slightest exertion brought on the cough, but he wrote on a slate which was kept near him —

"Less, dearest, than I owe you — truth and virtue never seemed so lovely, as when reflected from your conduct."

There was a long pause after the writing was erased — and presently the bells from neighbouring churches were heard sounding for evening service. William Howard wrote upon a slate —

"Mother, will you go to church to-night, and leave me, as you have sometimes done, with Alice?"

Mrs. Howard rose, and kissing his pale forehead, said solemnly, —

"I will pray for all of us — I am inconsiderate to leave you so seldom together."

"No, no," murmured her son, "only for to-night."

The lovers were together. Lovers! what an earthly word for two such beings as William and Alice. The one —

"Whose shadow fell upon the grave
He stood so near," —

the other, in the years of opening life, with, in

human probability, a long and solitary course before her. The heart of Alice was too pure for her to play the prude for an instant. She knelt on a stool beside the large easy chair in which he was supported, and, passing her arm round his neck, rested her own head upon his pillow, so that she could overlook the little slate on which he wrote, and murmur her answers into his ear. Nay, I think she pressed a kiss or two upon the skeleton fingers, before they traced these words : —

“ Tell me the truth, dear Alice, — where does the money come from, by means of which I am surrounded with so many comforts ? It cannot be my mother’s needlework that earns it.”

“ And you are too proud to take a little of our savings ? ”

“ No, darling, I am not. Pride does not become the dying ; but more is spent than even this accounts for.”

“ Then I will tell you,” said Alice, after a pause ; “ I think the truth will give you pleasure. The fellow-assistants who profited by your advice, and who feel that you are among the first few to whom they are indebted for the better order of things which is coming, have insisted on clubbing together to afford you every comfort in your illness.”

The slate dropped from his hand, and he *wrote*

no more. Did they both forget the physician's injunction that he should not speak?

"May God bless them for it!" burst feebly from his lips, yet more hurriedly than the phrase could have been written; "and yet," he continued, "they can ill afford it, especially now that they want every guinea to further the plans of the Association for their relief. Oh! Alice, is it really true that so many of the employers have joined?"

"Many," returned Alice, almost joyfully; "many of the most respectable houses already close at seven; and, though they are prepared to suffer a little at first, from the opposition of those who keep open, they seem at last to be carrying out your favorite motto, 'to follow the right whithersoever it may lead.' Nay, they do say that the hours of toil will ultimately be reduced to ten,—enough for poor humanity, *as we know who have worked.*"

"And for me to rob them at such a time!" murmured Howard, sinking his head upon the shoulder of Alice. She kissed his cheek—his lips—his forehead—and felt the hot tears streaming from his eyes.

"There is a way," said Alice, softly, her cheek tingling, she knew not why,—"there is a means for present need, if it could be adopted. You know my uncle will not give me a farthing of

my hundred pounds, nor can I touch it for some months to come;—yet—yet—it is so left—that—that—if I had married, it would have become my husband's."

"Well, dearest?"

Alice again paused, but her cheek leaned against his—her lips touched his ear—and she murmured, "Could it not so be yours?"

For a while there was no audible answer. William Howard raised his head from Alice Markham's shoulder, and gazed for a moment on the dark and earnest eyes which met his own with no coquettish shrinking, but with a look that revealed the depths of her soul.

"No, never!" he exclaimed, in a louder voice than had been heard for many weeks; and while he twined his arms around her with something of recovered strength, words of endearment burst from his lips, and broken phrases that might be interpreted, "Youth's bright imaginings, and poets' dreams, are dull delusions compared with such a heart as this!"

And then came the paroxysm of the cough, after so much excitement, and he sank back on his pillow as helpless as an infant. A little while, and they spoke of death, not marriage, quite calmly; and yet his frame shook when Alice murmured, "I—I—will be as a child

to your mother—and Herbert, too. Oh, William! he will not disgrace your teaching."

Again the horrid knell of that painful, tearing cough; and once more his head drops fondly on her shoulder. But there is a gush of something that comes even hotter and faster than scalding tears; in the cough he has broken a blood-vessel, and the life stream flows from his pale lips on the bosom of his faithful, high-hearted Alice! A few hours of mortal life were all that remained to William Howard.

Reader, this is a common story; one that in all its human emotions has been felt and acted thousands of times. There is something so blinding in custom, that the best and wisest of us are slow to see evils that do not come directly home to us. How many a gentle and sensitive woman, that has wept over the vivid pages of romance, or lent her keenest sympathies to the ideal sorrows of the drama, has, month after month, and year after year, visited the gay and gorgeous shops of the "Metropolitan Drapers," without so much as dreaming of the deep and real tragedies that were enacting "behind the counter." The blighted youth—the ruined health—the early graves—the withered minds—the corrupted morals—and, oh! the noble spirits, the true heroes of private life, who, stand-

ing forward to cheer and teach, by precept and example, have won the guerdon of eternal gratitude from their class. To my mind, it seems there must have been many William Howards ere the "Metropolitan Drapers' Association" could have been formed; an association now encouraged and assisted by clergy, members of parliament, influential literary and philanthropic gentlemen, and the most respectable *employers* in London.

And alas! there must have been many a selfish, narrow-minded man, like Mr. Markham, with heart contracted by the very system he attempted to uphold, ere the wrongs of the oppressed could have grown so deep as to require such a remedy.

Gentle, kind-hearted lady, who would not hurt a noxious insect in your path — who, if your pet bird pined in its gilded cage, would open the door to give it the option of liberty — think how much good there is in your power to do! Remember that units make up the millions. Raise your voice bravely to assert the right; and in your household see that it is done. Forbid the late shopping — forbid even all trading with the houses that do keep open. Think, too, it is the merry month of May — bright summer, golden autumn, are before us; then turn in thought, as you breathe the perfume of flowers, or inhale the

fresh sea-breeze, to those crowded shops, and their sickly, heart-crushed denizens! Yet they *might* have the morning and evening walk in the bright summer, and in the winter the cheerful fireside, the friendly converse, and the pleasant book. Health *might* bloom on their cheeks, and joy sparkle in their eyes!

LUCY HINCHLIFF.: THE DAILY GOVERNESS.

Campion, Thomas

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1849; American Periodicals

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**LUCY HINCHLIFF,
THE DAILY GOVERNESS.**
BY THOMAS CAMPION.

THE lark went up to heaven, seeming to beat his breast against the ancient sky ; yet tiny speck as he was— scarcely discernible to the keenest vision— his song was audible to Lucy Hinchliff in her mother's little garden. Lucy was a daily governess, and was in the act of plucking a rose to adorn her bosom, before she set out to enter upon the day's routine. She cast her eyes around the modest garden — it was a very modest, very little garden — looked up at the lark once more, received the last note of its song into her soul, smiled at the grey-headed mother in the pinched widow's cap, who was standing at the window, waved her adieux, and closed the small gate after her.

There was not in all the suburb in which we lived, a better girl, a prettier girl, a more loving, more dutiful daughter, than Lucy Hinchliff. She first attracted our attention when we went, with satchel on our back, willingly enough to school. She was younger by two years than ourselves — a little, timid thing, as we remember her. She

had a father at that time, but we could see that the old gentleman was poor ; and once we were prompted to offer her some of our victuals which we bore in our bag, (for we dined at school,) fearing that she had not enough to eat at home. It was only a boy's thought, and now we are more happy that we did not commit ourselves by the insult, than if we had realized our early dreams, those bubbles bred in a child's active brain.

Her father died, and they became poorer. A rich relation took Lucy away to bestow upon her a superior education. It was all he could do for her, he said ; though he kept his carriage, and his servants, and cast bread to dogs. She returned to her mother after three years, to aid their mutual support by teaching.

Who knows, besides themselves, the lives that daily governesses lead ? who has tasted, besides themselves, the bitterness of the bread they eat ? The fine mistress may not frown too severely upon her cook or footman. They would resent it, and would seek another place. But the poor governess ! That *she* will resign her engagement is not apprehended. And are there not dozens — scores, who would be glad to succeed her, if she gave herself airs ? There are tragedies in real life more sad to witness than any of the histrionic art, and the life of the daily gov-

erness, in meagre circumstances, is one whole tragedy.

Lucy Hinchliff closed the garden gate, and passed from her mother's sight. It was a fine morning, and she was early. She had, therefore, no occasion to hurry, as she was sometimes obliged to do. She felt very glad that the morning was fine, for to tell a homely truth, her shoes — well nigh worn out — were far from being water-proof. She had sat all day with wet feet once before, from the same cause, and much need she had to be careful of her health for her mother's sake. She had few acquaintances on the road she traversed — though she was familiar as their own children's faces to all the small tradesmen — they saw her pass so regularly morning and evening. The green-grocer would frequently tell his wife that it was time to get the breakfast, for the young lady with the music-paper was abroad. The toll-gate keeper was Lucy's only speaking acquaintance of the male sex. He had always a kind word for her. Nor did Lucy fail to ask him after the child that was scalded — a frightful accident that — or whether his eldest girl was at service yet, and other little queries. "There she goes," the man would say, when she had turned from him. "Her's is a hard life, poor thing!"

"Not hard at all, Mister Marten," retorted

Dame Wringlinen on one occasion. "Hard, indeed! I think she 's got a very easy berth o't. Put her over a washing tub, and give her three or four counterpanes for a morning's work, and see what she 'd make o't."

"Ah, you don't know all!" said the toll-keeper, significantly. And he was right.

The lady at whose house Lucy commenced the instructions of the day, was a very nervous lady indeed; and like your nervous people, she was extremely irascible. Lucy's knock offended her. She hated single knocks. Why had they a bell, if it was not to exempt the house from the vulgarity of single knocks? Once, in a fit of forgetfulness, the governess gave a palpitating double knock, and then Mrs. Robert Smith was astonished at her presumption. "Miss—Miss—I forget your name—" Mrs. Robert Smith often contrived to forget a name which was the property of a humble dependant, and was so much better than her own.

"Hinchliff, ma'am," prompted Lucy on the occasion referred to.

"Ah, Hinchliff. Well, Miss Hinchliff, if, for the future, you would remember not to give a double knock, you would oblige me. I really thought it was visitors, and, as I am in my deshabille, it set me all in a flutter—you should consider my nerves, Miss Hinchliff."

Poor Lucy! If she could have afforded to be so much in fashion as to own to the possession of nerves, the lady's nervousness would have infected her.

"Now, Miss Hinchliff," said Mrs. Robert Smith, when the governess had taken off her bonnet and shawl on the morning we make her acquaintance; "*are you up in those new quadrilles yet?*"

"I am very sorry, ma'am, but I have been so much engaged—I only took them home the day before yesterday, and so little of my time is my own."

"Well, Miss Hinchliff, of course, if you have too many engagements, and my dear children are to be neglected on that account, it will be Mr. Robert Smith's duty to seek another responsible person, whose engagements are not so numerous; you cannot object to that, I am sure."

"Oh, ma'am," was Lucy's faltering reply; "I am too happy to be employed by you. I will be sure to get the quadrilles ready by to-morrow."

God pity her. She spoke the truth. She was too happy to be employed by Mrs. Robert Smith.

"I will excuse you this time, Miss Hinchliff," said the lady, conciliated by Lucy's answer, "but I shall certainly expect the quadrilles to-morrow. I think you said when we first engaged you, that you taught Italian? Priscilla is to learn it."

"I shall be most happy, ma'am," replied Lucy, brightening up.

"Mr. Robert Smith says that he has read—he is a great reader, as you know—that there are some very pretty poems in Italian, though he called one by a very shocking name—a kind of playhouse thing."

"Which was that, ma'am?" inquired Lucy, mentally reverting to Goldoni and Metastasio.

"You ought to tell me," replied the lady. "You know, of course—the pretty Italian poem with the playhouse name."

"Do you mean Dante's *Divine Comedy*, ma'am?"

"Yes, that is it—a very pretty poem—is it not?"

"It is considered a very fine poem, ma'am."

"Yes, pretty or fine—that's what Mr. Robert Smith called it; though I think, if 'tis a comedy, it shouldn't be called *Divine*."

Lucy assured the lady that the *Divina Commedia* was not a play in five acts, with stage directions, but rather a religious poem.

"I understand your meaning," said her employer; "something like Milton, I suppose. I have heard Mr. Robert Smith remark—his remarks are so to the purpose—that Milton was a tragedy, quite. You will understand that you are to teach Priscilla Italian. And about the

terms, Mr. Robert Smith says you are not to increase them, as he really can't afford it."

"Ma'am," said Lucy, astonished.

"If you object, of course, we must find another responsible person, who will include Italian for the amount of your present salary."

Lucy's mother was in failing health. Need we say that she was "too happy" to teach Italian without remuneration, under the circumstances. On the same morning Mrs. Robert Smith dismissed her cook, who blundered at a *pate de foie gras*, and hired another at greatly enlarged wages.

The widow Hinchliff was not only in failing health, but she was nearer death than Lucy had any idea of. When the poor girl returned home that evening—she went to six houses first, and walked a distance of seventeen miles—she found that her parent had been obliged to retire to bed. The servant, alarmed by her mistress' condition, had called in a neighbor, who only waited for Lucy's return to urge the propriety of sending for a doctor. Lucy not only assented, but ran herself to fetch one. "I can give you no hope," he said; and she felt that a blight had indeed passed over her young life. When one that we dearly love is stricken down to die, we look out upon the world as if we had no longer hope, or part, or any lot therein.

She had to practise the quadrilles that night, on her hired piano, in fulfilment of the promise made to Mrs. Robert Smith. Her mother had fallen into one of those dozing, restless slumbers, peculiar to a state of sickness, and the thought of waking the notes of gay quadrille music in the house, on whose threshold, even at that moment, Death, the destroyer, stood, shocked Lucy's feelings. No, she could not do *that*, let Mrs. Robert Smith say what she pleased.

She sat through the longest night she had ever known — for the heart measures the hours, not the clock — a watcher by her mother's bed. When the glad sunlight came gushing in at the casement, and lark after lark poured forth his jubilant thanksgiving for his sleep in the dewy grass, she undressed herself, and went to her own chamber, leaving the servant to supply her place. There was no visible alteration in her parent when, with many fears and with one of the saddest hearts that ever beat in human bosom, she left the cottage upon her constant, diurnal mission. She was late, and had to walk hurriedly. It rained too, and the water soaked through the leaky shoes. She had no smile for the toll-gate keeper. He saw that she was sad, and contented himself with a touch of his hat, by way of recognition. He was sad too, for the scalded child had died during the night. "Best

not to tell her now," he thought ; "she has her own trouble this morning." God help her. She had indeed.

"You are full ten minutes behind your time, Miss Hinchliff. I never find you staying ten minutes over your time," was Mrs. Robert Smith's salutation.

"I am very sorry, Ma'am ; but I left my mother at home very ill—dying, ma'am, the doctor says," replied Lucy, bursting into tears.

"Dying ! dear me. Of course you feel very much put out ; but punctuality, Mr. Robert Smith says, is the soul of an engagement—and you have a character to keep up—but as you are come, you can set Priscilla's mind at ease ; she is dying to play the quadrilles, and to begin her Italian."

"I—I was unable to run them through last night, ma'am," stammered Lucy, "my mother was so ill."

"Then you are *not* ready with those quadrilles again, Miss Hinchliff!" exclaimed Mrs. Robert Smith ; "really, at your age, a young woman should know the value of her promise."

"I could not disturb my mother," said Lucy, appealingly.

"Of course, I take all that into consideration," replied her employer. "But you, as a responsible person, should know the value of a promise.

However, I will excuse you since your mother is dying ; only don't let it happen again. You will commence Priscilla's Italian this morning, of course ?"

"I have been so unfortunate as to forget my own grammar, but if Priscilla is provided with one —"

"Her father says that he cannot afford any Italian books, her French ones came so expensive. He thought you could have no objection to lend her yours."

What could Lucy say, but that her books were at Priscilla's service ?

Her mother was worse that evening, and had been, as the neighbor said, delirious during her absence. Lucy asked herself whether she should practise the quadrilles. She was not long in deciding. Though they should go without bread, she would not forget her duty as a daughter. Her place was at her mother's bedside.

That day Mr. Robert Smith paid a visit to a friend whose governess not only taught Italian for the same salary that was paid to Lucy Hinchliff, but also professed to include Spanish. When Lucy was admitted the next morning, the lady placed a small sum of money in her hand, and informed her that "domestic arrangements" would render her attendance in future unnecessary. The poor girl was not at all cast down by

this circumstance. Was not her mother ill—dying at home? She would not be obliged to leave her so early in the morning.

Her mother died three days afterwards. A letter sent by Lucy to the rich relation brought a cool answer back, in which the writer recommended her to be industrious, and to "keep her character."

And now Lucy was alone in the world, in which are so many faces, and so many hearts beating with warm life. Even the toll-gate keeper had disappeared. His place was supplied by a stranger, a man of coarse, repulsive aspect. Lucy felt the loss even of that acquaintance.

Within a month after her mother's death, she was compelled to resign another of her engagements; her employer, a widower, having made dishonorable proposals to her. She advertised in the papers, but could not meet with an appointment. She had removed into lodgings now.

One night—it was a cold, rainy November night—Lucy Hinchliff sat in her little room by her fire, much pondering over many things, but chiepest what it was fitting for a young girl like her to do, who being so unprotected, was exposed to so many insults. She gazed at her mother's portrait which hung over the mantle-shelf, and seemed to ask advice of the dead. But the dead

replied not. Only the bleak wind whistled.
Only the rain beat against the window-panes.

There was a stir below, as of feet coming up stairs. Lucy heard it without heed. The feet came higher and higher, however, and halted at her door ; upon the panels of which a rap sounded as from determined, sturdy knuckles. The governess started, and cried, "Come in," and a man came in.

It was her old acquaintance, the toll-keeper.

But not dressed as he was formerly. No. He wore a bran new suit of superfine Saxony cloth, and a gold watch-guard communicated with his vest pocket. As far as equipment went, he was in all respects the gentleman. And in the heart besides — in the heart besides.

"I beg your pardon, Miss, for intruding upon you," he said, bashfully. "I am come to speak to you about educating my children."

Lucy bowed. She thought she had misunderstood him.

"I am come into a large fortune lately, Miss — a very large fortune — a matter of a thousand a year. I knew no more of it, three months ago, bless you, than the man in the moon ; and I think, and my wife thinks, that our girls ought to be educated."

"Certainly," said Lucy, vacantly. She thought she was dreaming.

“And so we agreed that if you would come and live with us—we lives in a fine house now—and be one of ourselves, and teach the children, we thought that we should take it very kind of you.”

“Yes,” assented Lucy, mechanically, for she was not a whit the nearer waking.

“And if you would think two hundred pounds a year, and a room of your own, enough, it is yours to-morrow; and that’s all about it.”

The speaker, in the excitement of having accomplished his errand, clapped his hat on his head, and breathed freely. But he recollected himself, and took his hat off again.

“You wish me to be governess to your children. Do I understand you aright?” said Lucy, only half conscious that the scene was real.

“Yes, Miss, if you please; and if two hundred a year would satisfy you, why—why it’s done, and that’s just where it is.”

“I thank God!” cried Lucy, bursting into tears. She was wide awake, and understood all now.

It was all true—that was the best of it. The man had really inherited a large fortune, left him by some relative, hitherto unheard of. And was not his early thought about the poor governess, who gave him a good word every morning, and inquired after Billy, who was scalded? Yes;

for he had heard of her mother's death, and the proud consciousness of being able to confer a benefit on an orphan girl, elated his heart as much as the possession of a thousand pounds per annum. Lucy, of course, would not consent to receive the salary he had named. How it was finally settled, this chronicler knows not; but Lucy dwells with the *quondam* toll-keeper, and looks happy — very happy.

A small white stone has been erected at her mother's grave. You may see it, if you will walk for the purpose, to Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke-Newington.

MINNA MORDAUNT.

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.

Do you not observe the gentle smile and large, affectionate eyes of Minna Mordaunt? Look, I pray you, at the roundness of her arm, and the beauty of her taper fingers;—there, hanging on the edge of her basket as daintily as if they rested on the strings of a guitar:—how they ever raised that basket, full of round, white eggs, to the top bar of the stile, is a wonder to me. I never in my life saw eggs so badly packed. Why, there is not a blade of straw in the basket to prevent the one from crushing against the other! How exquisitely the black velvet band, with its rich clasp, sets off the delicate fairness of her throat!

In years long past, there dwelt—just where you see the spire of the village church peering above yonder trees—a courtly gentleman,—a man of fashion,—proud as proud might be, stately, rich,—ay, very rich,—an only son;—and only sons, I have observed, unless well tutored in their childhood, are seldom much beloved; the selfishness which springs and flourishes in the hearts of all youths, requires careful

pruning, or else it grows into a foul and loathsome weed, choking the plants of honest virtue, which yield, in humbler soils, a useful fruitage. This only son was rich, and proud, and handsome, gay and thoughtless,—thoughtless of everything but *self*:—there are many such, even in the present age. Virtue and honor do not keep pace, in these improving times, with what is generally termed intellect. But this has naught to do with Minna Mordaunt.

This great man *fancied* he loved the daughter of one of the farmers who rented a portion of his father's estate,—a simple country girl she was, but the pride of the whole village—a beauty really rustic;—and he frequently met her at that same stile where Minna Mordaunt is now standing: *there*, dressed in the very fashion you have but now looked upon, with her eggs *properly* arranged for market, often has the rich gentleman waited the poor girl's coming;—ay, and after a little while, *she* waited too for *him*. I do not like to give new readings of old stories;—the poor girl loved, and—was forsaken. She could not bear that those who once admired and regarded should consider her disgraced;—she felt she was forsaken, and she left her father's cottage one long autumn night, and managed her escape and her concealment with so much secrecy that no one knew her motive, nor any, save her

mother, her dishonor ; in six months from her departure, the mother and the secret slept within the same grave, beneath the shadow of the old church-wall ; — you may see the grave now, if it please you walk so far ; — it is much talked of in the village, for one night there sprung over it a tomb of the whitest marble, as if from the green grass, and on it were engraven only these words : —

“ WE CAN HAVE BUT ONE MOTHER ! ”

Time passed on : the farmer died, — the daughter and her mysterious disappearance were alike forgotten. The “ only son ” of our story had also buried his father, and increased in wealth, and in pride, and in honors ; but, I know not how it was, there was a shadow over him, and over all he did ; — he prospered, yet he was not blessed ; — he married a right noble lady, beautiful and of high blood, and it was said he loved her, — perhaps he did. I have witnessed some cranks and turns in what the world called “ love,” which seemed to me far more more like hate. They lived together many years, but the lady’s lips forgot their smiles, and her voice its music : then at last she also died, leaving her husband a very glorious heritage — five noble boys.

It was most strange ; but, one by one, those children drooped, faded, and, in less than six

years after their mother's funeral, five coffins, all of different lengths, were placed within the vault with hers.

* * * * *

It was a sunny day in June ; the windows of a spacious drawing-room in the chief hotel at Dover were open, yet the rays of the "god of day" were carefully excluded by closely-drawn blinds ; — a lady reclined upon a sofa, and her daughter, seated by her side, was reading to her from an open volume that rested on her knees ; two mulatto women were arranging various packages ; and it was evident that the party had recently landed from an Indiaman, which, from the windows of the room, was distinctly visible. The mother was dressed in widow's weeds, the daughter in slight mourning.

"I am tired of that book," exclaimed the elder lady ; "do find something to amuse me, Minna."

"Birth, deaths and marriages," exclaimed the young lady, smiling, and taking up a paper. She read, first the births, then the marriages, then the deaths : the last on the dark list was as follows : —

"Died, on the morning of the 7th, at Mordaunt-hall, Edwin, last surviving child of the Honorable Charles Leopold Danforth Mordaunt, to the inexpressible anguish of his father, who

has followed his amiable and accomplished wife, and five sons, to the grave within six years."

A shriek from one of the Ayahs told the young lady that her mother had fainted.

Mrs. Browdon was the widow of an old general officer of the Bengal establishment, who had taken it into his head to marry when most men think of death ; and soon after his final departure from drill and dinners, the physicians abroad sent his widow to Europe, to recover her health, which, they said, her native air would restore. She did not believe them.

About three hours after Mrs. Browdon had fainted, her daughter was sitting on the same spot *alone* with her mother. She was deadly pale, and the tresses of her silken hair clung to cheeks which were soaked with tears.

" You know all now, Minna," said Mrs. Browdon, " you know all now ; yet you have not cursed me ! "

Minna flung herself on her knees by her mother's couch, and pressed her weak and fading form to her bosom.

" I have told you all—all—how I was deceived,—how I fled my home,—how you, my child, were born,—how true a friend I found,—how *she* protected me,—how I met General Browdon, who, believing me a widow, offered me his hand,—how I risked all, and told him the

TRUTH ;—but the old man loved me still ; he called me weak, not wicked,—he pitied, and forgave ;—but, Minna, your mother could not forgive herself ; your sweetest smiles were ever my reproaches,—silent, unmeant, yet still reproachful. And now, that you know all, you do not curse me, Minna ! Can you, can you forgive me ?”

“ My dearest mother, you know I do ; you know I *have* ever, ever *will* bless you, and the kind old general—*he* was not my father ? Then tell me of my father,—my real, real father,” said the lovely girl.

“ Minna, he is sonless,” replied her mother ; “ what you read was his record.”

“ Dear mother, then,” exclaimed her daughter, all woman’s feelings rallying round her heart,—“ dearest mother, cannot you, too, pity and forgive ?”

“ Forgive, as I was myself forgiven,” said Mrs. Browdon. “ I can—I can—I do forgive, and from my soul I pity him.”

Alas ! why should so sweet a face as Minna’s be linked to so sad a tale ? It is like wreathing a garland of cypress round a moss-rose ! and yet the story must be told :—it has already recorded many deaths ; it must note another.

Mrs. Browdon’s presentiment on leaving India was too fatally fulfilled ; the doctor’s prophecies

proved false ; the breezes of its native country could not renovate a plant which had blossomed and faded under the fervid excitement of the East : she felt that her very hours were numbered, and she immediately wrote, recommending her child to the protection of—a father !

“ Had I found,” she wrote, “ on my return to England, that you were encircled by blessings, you should have remained ignorant of the existence of your daughter, but, knowing your bereavements, it would be ill of me to take from you the only child the Almighty has spared you.”

“ You are so like what I was at your age, my child,” she said, as she placed the letter in Minna’s hands, “ that if Mordaunt could but see you in the dress he first saw me at the foot of the church hill, resting against the stile which divides Mordaunt-park from Woodbine-hollow, it would hardly need this letter to tell him who you are.

“ We cherish first affections with a tenderness and care which the interest and feelings of after-life look for in vain. I have received homage, such as is never paid to our sex in England ; my robes have been sewn with pearl ; and you will find, Minna, treasures of gold, silver, and brocades, such as are seldom seen, within those cases ; yet, yonder, in that small green trunk is

the remnant of something that I loved when I was happiest."

At her mother's desire, Minna brought the box: her thin, trembling fingers undid the fastenings;—*there* were no brocades, no gold, no jewels! It contained nothing, save the straw cottage-hat and dress of an English peasant girl. Minna looked into her mother's eyes,—she dreaded that she raved,—but those beautiful eyes were mild and calm, and full of tears.

"Beneath," she continued, "is a basket. When first I met *him*, that basket hung upon my arm, filled with a tribute from our humble home-stead, which it was my duty to carry to *his* mother. I remember, on my return, his filling that basket, Minna, with roses—ay, roses!—but *not* roses *without thorns*. Those were my robes of innocence! I scorned them afterwards, and wore others, which I then called *fine*: these were discarded; but in my affliction I remembered them, and brought them with me; a feeling of mingled pain and pleasure urged me to do so. I thought they would recall my innocence; but no! *that* could not be: I am sure they stimulated me to after good; and perhaps their coarseness *kept* me humble,—at least they have caused me many tears; and tears, my child, soften and fertilize the heart: we learn of tears what we cast off with smiles!"

Poor lady ! she died that night ; not, however, without further converse with her daughter. .

Minna in a little time repaired to her mother's native village ; she learned that her father had grown more morose than ever ; that he shunned all society.

" I have never seen him smile," said the old landlord of the inn.

" But I have seen him weep," said the still older landlady, " and that last Sunday, at the stile called ' Beauty's Ladder,' where, long ago, he often met poor Minny Graham : he goes there every Sunday when he ought to be at church."

" And so ought you, dame, not spying after your landlord ; at any rate, you should be wise enough to keep your news to yourself. What gentleman, think you, likes to be seen crying ? "

" Better, I guess," replied the dame, " to be ashamed of the sin than ashamed of the tears : I am sure I did not think there was a tear in him till I saw it."

The next Sunday, " the strange young lady," as Minna was called by the villagers, was not at church. Need I say *where* she was ?

Turn to the picture,—there she is ! and the black gorget round her throat, which, I forgot to mention, her mother clasped with her own fingers the very night she died.

Mordaunt was proud of his daughter. The

lonely place in his heart was filled ; he had something to love,—something belonging to himself ; he felt his youth renewed while looking on the image of what, in his youth, he had once, though for a little time, really loved.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GIFTED.

Youatt, Elizabeth

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1849; American Periodicals
pg. 191

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GIFTED.

BY ELIZABETH YOUNG.

"In memory's land waves never a leaf,
There never a summer breeze blows,
But some long smothered thought of joy or grief
Starts up from its solemn repose ;
And forms are living and visible there,
Which vanished long since from our earthly sphere."

MISS HOLFORD.

Did we choose to mention real names, many might recollect as well as ourselves the early and somewhat sudden death of a poet, whose precocious talent gave rise to hopes which were destined never to be realized ; but we forbear to do so, lest any might be found who would remember only to weep. He was little known out of his own immediate circle, of which he was the idol ; for Fame, ever busy in seeking after her gifted children, had not time to stamp her seal of immortality upon his brows before they withered beneath the cold hand of death. And yet a few kindred spirits were found to lament him, and mourn over the sudden quenching of a mighty intellect, whose living glory they might have decried and envied ; — but death sanctifieth all things.

We were young at that time, and anxious to pay tribute with the rest at the shrine of departed genius, knowing him only through his own tender and beautiful revealings; but although the rock of inspiration was repeatedly struck, no answering strain came forth at our bidding; we were not in the mood. Thought flowed too rapidly to be chained and cramped into lines each ending in a rhyme, and flinging aside our tablets, we went forth, lured by the sound of joyous voices, and light laughter, and joined the merry group upon the lawn. The young, the beautiful, yea, and the gifted, even as he had been, were there

“Smiling as if earth contained no tomb.”

But there was one among them, a widow, aged it would seem more by grief than time, whose pale sweet face and low voice had won us to her side all that summer day; and by whom we again lingered, as we are apt to do where we feel that our presence confers pleasure.

“You have been weeping,” said she kindly.

“Yes, for I have been thinking of him.”

“Silly child! And yet it is well that the actual troubles of life have not yet arisen to sweep away these ideal griefs and sympathies. After all it is a happy period —

When every heart appears

The temple of high thought, and noble deed;

When our most bitter tears

Fall o'er some melancholy page we read,—

but it soon passes away."

"Not always, surely?"

"Almost invariably. The fountain of a grief which in youth is perpetually overflowing, and whose waters soothe, even while theyadden, is soon withered up by scorn and anguish. And age, with all its accumulated miseries, sheds fewer tears than childhood over its ideal and imaginary sorrows: and yet he was worthy of your lamentations."

"You knew him, then?"

"We have met, but it was years ago. I was staying on a visit at the same house where he first became acquainted with her of whom his latter poems breathe so sweet a spirit of tenderness and regard. She was my school-fellow and intimate friend, although many years my junior."

"And he loved her? After all she is to be envied."

"So she always said, and used to wonder what she could have done to merit so much happiness; for she had a meek and humble spirit, and was well suited to be the bride of a poet."

"How she must have worshipped him!"

"Yes, so she did, I believe, until she learned to love him still more. It was a strange tale, that meeting!"

And the widow bowed down her pale face upon her hands, while the spirit of the past stole over her like a dream of old days. We withdrew a little apart, and sat down side by side upon the grass; and that low voice rose up like a strain of melancholy music, between the pauses of which came the merry laughter of the gay dancers on the lawn.

“A Christmas in an old country house is either a very dull affair or quite the contrary; the one I am about to describe was the latter. Besides an agreeable party domesticated within doors, all equally ready to amuse or be amused, we had always some visitor drop in of an evening, and generally wound up with a dance, or a game of forfeits, to please the children, in which children of a larger growth were not ashamed to join.

“At the time of which we speak, some little excitement was occasioned by the proposed visit of Mr. Noel Fletcher, (for we will know the poet only by that name.) He had been intimate at college with the son of our worthy host, and cheerfully accepted his invitation into D—; and as the day approached, my friend Gay Pemberton, who scarcely ever had his volume of poems out of her hand, and was even accused of sleeping with it under her pillow, spoke of nothing else but his expected arrival. We have wondered since whether this was merely the

result of her romantic and highly-wrought feelings, or occasioned by a dim foreboding of how intimately their future destinies were to be knit together.

“It was the evening before the day on which he was to have come, and everything that was said or done returns to my mind as though it were but yesterday. A few accidental visitors had dropped in as usual, among whom was the clergyman of the place, and a young man with a bright florid complexion, and a pair of the merriest blue eyes in the world, whose name I did not catch ; and who, after romping with the children until their bed-time, came and flung himself full length on a couch near where we sat, and taking up a newspaper, seemed thoroughly comfortable and at home.

“Gay Pemberton was in one of her wildest humors, looking so happy and beautiful all the time, that it was impossible to chide or be angry with her ; and but little work went on among the noisy group she had collected around her. Even the whist players looked up at the sound of her merry laughter, and smiled too, without knowing why. And then on a sudden, as we must have noticed on a bright summer day, the sun went in, leaving a brief shade even more delightful from contrast.

“‘ How I wish to-morrow were come ! ’ said she, thoughtfully.

“‘ That is, if it bring the poet, but not else,’ we playfully rejoined.

“‘ Ah ! it is sure to do that, for Morris showed me the letter,— and he writes such a beautiful hand ! — promising to be with him on Thursday, without fail. How I longed to keep it, but I feared he would laugh at me.’

“‘ It was more than probable. But you must get Mr. Fletcher to write something in your album.’

“‘ If he speaks to me, I shall certainly ask him, if it is only his name.’

“‘ If he speaks to you ?’

“‘ Yes, for I have fancied him proud and reserved, as all geniuses, they say, are. You will think me very silly, but I know what he will be like, as well as if we were old friends, and am almost confident that I should recognize him, were we even to meet elsewhere.’

“‘ Perhaps this is he ?’ said I, as the door opened to give admittance to the village doctor, a marvellous resemblance to Shakspeare’s far-famed apothecary. While at that moment our opposite neighbor looked up as if he had found something vastly entertaining in his newspaper, and laughed outright, almost as joyously as Gay herself had done but a short time previously.

“ ‘ I should like to hear Miss Pemberton’s ideal of a poet,’ exclaimed a young lady.

“ ‘ Well, then, I will give it to you, in order that you may compare it with the original. He is tall, and pale, as the gifted ever are ; with a magnificent brow — dark, dreamy eyes — and a proud lip, whose smiles are only for the very few, but its scorn for the whole world ; whom all worship, but it is the privilege of but one or two to love ! ’

“ ‘ A dangerous privilege, if we are to believe the wild chronicles of their lives,’ replied another ; ‘ great talents are said to be for the world — not for domestic life.’

“ ‘ But why should this be ? ’ asked Gay, almost sadly — and there were none to answer. It is a question which will probably never be solved. We are told by one, herself a poetess, and a very sweet one too, that

‘ Fame’s laurel wreath
Distils its poison on the brow beneath ; ’

but left to draw our own conclusions from the truthful experience of daily life, how far its blighting influence extends around the charmed circle of affection.

“ ‘ Well,’ exclaimed Gay, at length, for nothing ever damped that sanguine and joyous spirit for many moments together, ‘ I dare say if the private histories of all were sought after, and

revealed like those of the gifted, they would be found much the same in the end. Or, supposing it true that genius is irritable and exacting; again I say, a glorious privilege is hers to whose lot it falls to soothe and minister to it, catching glimpses of a mighty intellect which should dazzle and blind her to weakness inseparable, after all, from mortality.'

"Our opposite neighbor laid down the newspaper; perhaps he found it vain to try and read in our vicinity, and fixed his eyes upon Gay, with a look of undisguised admiration, of which the young enthusiast was utterly unconscious.

"'But have you quite finished your description of the poet?' asked her fair interrogator.

"'Yes, I think so, all but his voice, which of course is low — sweet — and marvellously eloquent!'

"'Have you forgotten what Dr. Johnson says upon this subject?' asked the gentleman I have before mentioned, joining in the conversation quite naturally, while Gay answered him in the same frank spirit.

"'Yes, indeed. What was it?'

"'The transition,' he tells us, 'from an author's book to his conversation is too often like an entrance into a large city after a distant prospect. Remotely we see nothing but spires of temples, and turrets of palaces, and imagine it

the residence of splendor, grandeur, and magnificence ; but when we have passed the gates, we find it perplexed with narrow passages, disgraced with despicable cottages, embarrassed with obstructions, and clouded with smoke.'

" 'Ah ! Dr. Johnson was a bear !' said the girl, wilfully ; and then their wild and gleeful laughter mingled so joyously, that many joined in it from very sympathy.

" 'Oh ! if this book were mine !' continued Gay, after a pause, and still referring to the same endless theme, ' with Noel Fletcher's name written thus, with his own hand, I think I should have nothing left to wish for.'

" 'And yet compliments is a cold term,' said our blue-eyed friend, archly. ' Would you not rather have it, with the author's love ?'

" 'No, indeed, his kind regards would more than content me — his love has been too frequently bestowed.'

" 'Never, I will venture to swear !' interrupted her companion, vehemently.

" 'Then you have not read his works,' replied Gay, turning over the pages, which she almost knew by heart, with a rapid finger. ' See, here is positive conviction — " To my Beloved One." Not to mention twenty other sweet and tender sonnets addressed " To Mary," &c. Nay, I should say that he had not only been in love,

and that too more than once, but had likewise been disappointed! Or why so eloquent upon blighted affection, and broken hearts? Why address those touching lines of "The Forsaken to the False One," which must haunt her whole future life, like an unforgotten voice? And yet I cannot fancy any girl flinging away in very wantonness the rich gift of such a heart as his.'

"' But surely you must be aware,' returned he, speaking in a low voice, and more earnestly than the subject seemed to demand, ' that these are merely ideal themes. What is poetry without love? A world without sunshine or flowers. But the poet needs not experience every subject on which he writes, while he can create and imagine them. Nay, where he feels most, he is least likely to do justice to his task.'

"' And yet,' replied Gay, ' this is stripping romance of its brightest spell: we should seldom weep over fictitious sorrows, knowing them to be such. It is Louis, King of Bavaria, I think, who says, "Out of the heart alone shall that unfold itself which shall truly go to the heart again!"'

"' Nevertheless,' said her companion, with a vexed air, ' I will venture to affirm that Noel Fletcher is no more in love than I am!'

"' Well, I shall be glad to believe that his heart is really not the seared and blighted thing he describes it.'

“ ‘ Pshaw ! all romance and folly ! ’ replied our anti-poetical friend, abruptly. While Gay looked like one but half convinced ; and remained poring over the book until the hour of rest ; but little more conversation passing between us worthy of narration.

“ The following morning I was to start on a fortnight’s visit some thirty miles off, but to return time enough to accompany Gay Pemberton to her happy home, where another succession of merry days was in store for us. Ah ! those were pleasant times — the golden days of our youth ! And we do well to make the most of them, for their freshness once past is gone forever ! The very thought of having to be up early kept me wakeful all night, otherwise, perhaps, Gay’s gentle voice, for we slept together, would have failed to arouse me, as with closed eyes and smiling lips she repeated one of Noel Fletcher’s sweetest sonnets, the last lines dying away until they became almost inaudible. It was strange to hear such poetry so given at that hour ; and sad too, for the subject was a gloomy one, and I could not think but I was dreaming too, and so lay quite still until the morning sun warned me to prepare for new scenes. Novelty at that time was but another word for pleasure, and Gay was as cheerful and busy as myself, so that our little treasures were soon arranged, and we both sat

down on the neatly packed box, and began to talk of the future.

" She laughed when I told her about the sonnet which she had repeated in her sleep,— confessing that it had occupied her last waking hours, and that she was very silly, but should grow wiser some day, she hoped,— pitying me the next moment for being obliged to go away before Noel Fletcher's arrival.

" But, perhaps, he may not be gone on your return, although they say he is so much sought after.—By the bye, he may have come even now for aught we know, for I remember he said in his letter, "*Early on Thursday morning;*" I will just run down and ask Morris.'

" She did so, but returned, breathless with agitation, a few moments afterwards, and flinging herself into my arms, burst into a passionate flood of weeping, and hid her burning face upon my bosom. They were the first tears I ever remember to have known her shed.

" Oh! take me with you!" she wildly exclaimed. ' If you love me, take me instantly away!'

" Impossible, my dear child! but I will stay with you, if you will tell me how I can be of service, and who has grieved you thus.'

" No one. It is all my own fault!" And her sobs redoubled with the effort to speak.

“ At this moment the breakfast bell rang ; and as the only fault, if that could be called a fault, which I could ever discover in our worthy host, was a most rigid adherence to punctuality in all things, its warning was not to be disregarded.

“ ‘ Go down,’ said Gay, ‘ and say that I have the headache — that I am ill ! — I shall be calmer against your return, or you will have heard the story of my folly from other lips ; but do not think for an instant of giving up your journey on my account — it is fit that I should suffer, and be despised as I now despise myself ! ’

“ I obeyed her in silence, having no time, besides being too bewildered, to put any further questions then ; but I could not help observing that when I delivered my message, Morris, the eldest son of our host, laughed outright, and stole a mirthful glance at our blue-eyed friend of the previous night, who was comfortably-established at the breakfast table with his everlasting newspaper.

“ ‘ I trust Miss Pemberton is not seriously indisposed,’ said he, kindly, as I took the vacant place by his side.

“ ‘ No, I believe not, only a headache,’ and then Morris laughed again most provokingly, while his friend looked almost as annoyed as myself.

“ ‘ You must not forget to tell Gay,’ said the former, ‘ that Mr. Noel Fletcher has inquired

most anxiously after her, and is inconsolable at her absence.'

" 'Noel Fletcher !' and the whole truth flashed upon my mind, and I felt half inclined to be angry with the poet for his incognito, but that he seemed so penitent ; so poor Morris had the full benefit of it, and after all he was most to blame for not properly introducing his gifted friend.

" But how was Gay employed all this time ? Doubtless in recalling to mind, with tears of shame and vain repentance, all that had passed between them on the previous night. No wonder that she should tremble at the thought of meeting him.

" 'And yet how could I imagine,' said she, simply, 'that such a man could be a poet ? with his bright color like any farmer, and his merry eyes, — besides, he was actually *embonpoint* !'

" 'How amused he must have been at your description of him,' said I.

" Gay colored, but she grew calmer : pride — the pride which rarely deserts a woman — had come to her aid ; and she parted from me with more composure than I had expected. Morris' triumph, and Mr. Fletcher's too, if he felt any, would be but brief, when they found the wild romantic girl transformed into the proud and dignified woman. And I pictured to myself their

cold embarrassed meeting, as the carriage whirled me away to fresh scenes and pleasures.

“A fortnight — how soon it is gone when we are happy! — Fourteen days, then, seem only like so many hours. Poor Gay, I had forgotten all about her, and how she was most likely longing for my arrival to go back to her quiet home, the spell of her wild yet sweet dreams broken forever! It was evening when I returned — there were lights in the upper rooms, and the sound of music and merry laughter. And yet, somehow, I half feared that Gay would not be found among that mirthful party, nor was she. Morris smiled when I inquired after her, even as he had done on the eventful morning of my departure ; and pointed to the balcony, which was of stone, extending the whole length of the house, and a cool and pleasant retreat in the summer, although scarcely desirable on such a night as this.

“‘Pshaw!’ said Morris, ‘who ever felt the cold at eighteen, beneath such a glorious moon, and with a poet for a companion?’

“‘Mr. Fletcher is still here then?’

“‘Yes, in spite of his numerous engagements — but they are coming.’ And a moment afterwards Gay’s arms were about my neck, and her sweet voice welcoming me back ; while tears — real burning tears, in spite of her beaming looks,

fell like rain. But she dashed them away in a moment, asking a thousand random questions about my visit, without waiting for an answer to one of them. While Noel Fletcher stood by with folded arms, looking as delighted as if she had been uttering the most eloquent harangue in the world ; his blue eyes fairly dancing with happiness.

“ ‘ And now,’ said I, having replied as briefly as possible to her numerous queries, ‘ I am quite ready to return with you whenever you please.’

“ ‘ I am in no particular hurry,’ said Gay, casting down her eyes. ‘ But you must be fatigued with your journey — shall we retire ? ’

“ I willingly agreed, while Mr. Fletcher said laughingly, although I believe he really thought it at the moment, that I was very selfish and disagreeable, to wish to keep Miss Pemberton all to myself ; and then in a changed voice turned to whisper a very protracted good-night, which lasted several minutes before Gay could disengage her hand and follow me up stairs. There was little need of words — on the dressing-room table lay a small and elegantly bound book, which I knew at once to be Noel Fletcher’s Poems ; and when Gay took it up, and, smiling through her tears, pointed to its title page, and we read there her own name ‘ with the author’s love,’ I asked no more questions, but rejoiced with the un-

troubled gladness of youth, that things had thus come to pass.

“ It is needless attempting to repeat Gay’s broken history of what had taken place during my brief absence ; and the pains Noel Fletcher must have taken to satisfy her previous doubts with regard to the ideality of his poetical loves and sorrows ; and here his looks were certainly in his favor, for no one would have taken him to be a man whose heart was either seared or broken. Then he had to reconcile her to the very reverse of her wild dream — to apologize for those merry eyes, and the bright healthful glow of his complexion, and promise, if it would win her, to be the gloomy being she had described, proud to all but one, so that one might be Gay Pemberton ! While she wondered how she could have ever fancied him any other than he was, — and owned for the thousandth time that she had been very silly !

“ And now I would fain linger over this part of my narrative, relating how, as I have before said, Gay’s worship of the poet, the genius, had gradually less of awe, and more of human love in it. How her very gentleness disarmed our playful satire, and how Noel Fletcher adored her, while his verses grew no less eloquent because addressed to a real and tangible deity ! — His introduction to her venerable parents — their

simple bridal — and how merry and happy we all were on that day. It seems like a bright dream long past!" — And the widow, when she arrived at this part of her story, closed her eyes wearily, as though she would fain the vision would come again.

" Well, you know the end," said she at length: " of the double wedding which took place at that time, there are left two widows and no bridegroom!"

There was another pause, after which she continued more calmly, but still without reference to her own history, into which we dared not inquire, but only guessed that it must have been a very sad one, —

" Oh ! what a home was theirs ! Gay's sweet faith had been the true one, and she was not called upon for any marvellous degree of patience and endurance. The most sanguine imaginings of her young and romance-loving spirit were more than realized ; while the glorious voice of the poet went abroad like a blessing ! Again and again it was heard — it found its way into palace and cottage — and then, just when men began to look for its coming, as for a familiar and household thing, was suddenly hushed forever ! Heaven have pity upon her on whom this weary silence will fall the heaviest !"

" Amen," said I gently, for my heart was full.

“To-morrow,” continued the widow, “I start for her solitary abode. They say she is ill, but I do not pray for her recovery unless it please God, but would rather supplicate that in his mercy he would take her to himself! There is no more happiness for her in this world now. Nay, do not weep, my poor child!” she added, laying her withered hand kindly upon my bowed head. “After all, it is a glorious earth we live in, especially to the young; and there are a thousand happy wives and mothers to one widow such as I. The gifted are not always taken, and while sorrow is isolated, and seldom to be met with, joy aboundeth everywhere. Hark! how they laugh! You should be with them, and not here; but age and grief are apt to make one selfish.”

That night we went to sleep thinking of all that we had heard during the day, but more especially of Gay Pemberton and the poet, and dreamed that a certain fairy tale which had made the charm of our childhood was realized, and the genius of the future stood ready to bestow any one gift we liked to ask for — but it was to be but one. There was health, for the lack of which all other pleasures were continually losing their zest, — riches, which should command the world, — beauty, how often yearned and wept for, — fame, more tempting than them all, and

the only one which would survive the tombs,— and yet we hesitated, while the bright face of the spirit smiled calmly on us, and the smile brought back as with a spell the memory of all that we had heard, and our choice was instantly made ;— our one wish — *May we never survive those we love!* For what is health when we pray as that widow prayed to die ?— riches, when those with whom we would share them are gone away ?— beauty, which was sought and prized but to win the regard of those eyes which death hath closed ?— or fame, dear only that one might well be proud of us ? And me-thought the fairy looked pleased with our choice, and then the whole vision passed away.

The following morning came a brief note from our new friend. “ Rejoice with us,” she wrote, “ it is all over ! The prayer of the broken heart has been heard, and they are together again in heaven ! ”

Years have rolled on since then, and there are none left to recognize the above sad and truthful sketch ; did we think otherwise, it would never have been written : and yet, like the fables of childhood, it has its moral. That the gifted are neither raised by their genius above, nor formed to live without, the pale of human love and sympathy, but common clay even as ourselves,— loving — trusting — doubting — too often erring !

With good intents, marred in the acting oft,
With heavenward thoughts that fail thro' weariness,
And droop the wing while yet the glance aspires ;
Having much cause for gratitude, — but more
For penitence sincere ; yet how infirm !

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SELF INDULGENCE.: A FRAGMENT.

MISS POWER

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1848; American Periodicals

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SELF INDULGENCE.

A FRAGMENT.

BY MISS POWER.

"I WAS very young when I was thrown, or rather let loose, in the world; I had just completed my eighteenth year when my father died, and my mother—my dear, gentle mother, whose sweet, loving eyes are now before me—had been dead about three years; my guardian was a weak, indolent, good-natured man, who allowed me to follow the bent of my own inclinations, always consoling himself by saying, 'Boys will be boys: the lad has a good heart, and will never get into any serious scrape.' At twenty-one I came into a splendid fortune: I was an only child; people told me I was very handsome—I believed them, but despised most of them for giving me the information. I knew I had no common abilities, but I was indolent, and did not often display my talents. I ought to have been happy, according to the worldly acceptation of the term, but I was not; my life was passed in thirsting and seeking after a something which always eluded my grasp. I dashed headlong into the

giddy round of pleasure, but I always saw the grinning skull behind the smiling mask. I went abroad, and travelled for some time on the continent; in Italy I enjoyed some delicious hours, but I soon wearied of the indolent life of such a climate. I tried love, and attached myself to the gay, and handsome, and admired Lady C——; but she was too gay — she laughed when I was sad, and overpowered me with her spirits; she was too *brilliantly* handsome; her eyes were always bright, and never soft; she was too much admired, for she sought other admiration than mine, and by degrees I left off my visits, and ceased to pay homage at her shrine. The turf entailed too much trouble, and I did not care enough about money to render the winning or losing of it an affair of much interest — the latter reason also applied to gambling; so that if I escaped falling into the follies and vices of most of my companions, it was not from principle, but merely from the want of inclination.

“ Thus rolled away some of my earlier years, and at five-and-twenty I was more *blasé* than most of the men ‘about town’ of five-and-forty. At length I turned to study, and here I found some relief from the demon *ennui*. For two years I occupied the talents so long dormant; I read and reflected deeply — time no longer hung heavy on my hands; the greater part of each

day, and a considerable portion of the night, was spent in study, till my health began to give way; both mind and body were affected, for my reading was of a nature as little calculated to give health to the former as was such constant application to the latter. I devoted myself entirely to every kind of wild, visionary, and mysterious lore. Had I lived in the time of Louis XI., I should have been an alchymist and astrologer—in the present age what could I be? A nervous fever put an end to my speculations for a period, and, after some weeks of severe suffering, I crawled forth to see a little of the busy life that whirled around me. It was in the middle of the season; every one was in town, and with my mind enervated and lowered by illness, I took a sort of childish pleasure in driving about and seeing the busy crowd of pleasure-hunters in the Park; in a little while I grew stronger, and could enjoy with zest a gallop against the wind.

“One day I mounted my horse as usual, and rode to the Park. Avoiding the crowd of equestrian loungers at the foot of the Duke of Wellington’s statue, I turned down by the Serpentine, and rode on to the entrance of Kensington Gardens. It was a very hot day, and the shades of the bowery trees looked so inviting, that I felt tempted to dismount and enjoy a solitary ramble: a slight circumstance decided me. While I was

deliberating, a carriage drove up to the entrance, and a lady, followed by a little boy, alighted; I did not see her face as she got out, but there was an Ariel lightness about her figure, a perfect symmetry in the tiny foot, as it was placed on the step of the carriage, an exquisite mixture of elegance and simplicity in her dress, in short, an *air distingué* in all that appertained to her, that, stoic as I was, a feeling of curiosity, if not interest, immediately determined me to follow her footsteps. I dismounted accordingly, and giving my horse to my groom, at a respectful distance I pursued the path she had taken.

“ She walked slowly on, now and then pausing to call to the child, who, wild with health and spirits, was continually wandering from her side. What a glorious creature that boy was! He might have been about four years old; dazzlingly fair, and with a profusion of golden ringlets, his eyes, brows, and long lashes, were yet dark as one of Murillo’s boys; he was exquisitely dressed, and altogether looked as thoroughbred as the lady he accompanied.

“ All this time I was vainly wishing to get a glimpse of her face; I might easily have done so by passing her, but I would not be guilty of that most underbred act of rudeness—staring under a lady’s bonnet, so I continued to follow at a distance, hoping the chance might favor me: it did

at last, for the child lingering behind, she turned round and waited for him to join her. How was I repaid for my patience! In my wildest dreams — in my ideal visions of beauty, nothing half so faultlessly lovely had ever glanced across my brain. Now that the memory of her face is before me, I cannot describe it. There is a halo of innocence, of sweetness, of angelic purity, of intellect, beaming round it, that makes each feature, perfect as it is, become merely an auxiliary to her beauty. I felt that that woman was my destiny! I, who had never loved — I, who had laughed at love as a weakness from which I deemed myself forever secure, — I, who had turned with contempt from the smiles of some of the loveliest, had in one second become the veriest slave that ever knelt in the dust where his scornful and haughty mistress had trodden.

“ She left the gardens, and I know not how I got home. I cast aside my books — I burned and trampled on the manuscripts, the results of hours of unremitting toil, study, and reflection ; by day I walked, rode, or drove through the Park, the streets, the gardens ; by night I frequented balls, concerts, the opera, the theatres, all for one glimpse of that face. Everybody *congratulated* me on my new mode of life — poor fools! they little knew the burning anxiety, the feverish restlessness, the hope deferred, the constantly recur-

ring disappointments, that tormented me day and night.

"At last my search was successful; I met her and was introduced to her. How my brain throbbed!—for a moment I could neither move nor speak—her voice recalled me—I know not what I said, but by degrees the holy calm of her soft eyes communicated itself to me, and my soul became placid as a sleeping child.

"She was the wife of another—that boy was her son. Sometimes I loved that child passionately, because it was hers; and at others the sight of him roused my jealous soul almost to madness. Lord Roselyn, her husband, was considerably her senior; he was very popular; everybody said he was so clever, so amiable, so agreeable. How I hated him!—the sound of his praises was gall and wormwood to me. But why? What cared I for the suffrages of that world I despised? It was because they gave *her* pleasure. Yes, she loved him! and I, who would have knelt at her feet and laid down my life for her with pleasure—I was to be the witness of the tender looks exchanged—of the pressure of the hand when they met—of the smile of pleasure and affection that accompanied that pressure! Often have I left her presence, rushed home, and, throwing myself on the bed, tore my hair and gnashed my teeth like a raving maniac.

“ Surely she must have seen that I loved her; and yet I could not be sure; she was so innocent, so perfectly guileless, that she seemed as if no thought or suspicion of evil could enter into the pure soul; and I used every effort to conceal my secret both from her and from the world. Often when we met in society, I kept entirely apart from her the whole evening, and contented myself with gazing at her from a distance. But I had one consolation—she had sat for her picture—it was a miniature, a perfect likeness; by the force of an immense bribe, I induced the artist to copy it for me. That, at least, was my own;—in my hours of solitary anguish I fled to it for consolation, and its heavenly smile always brought peace to my wrung and tortured heart.

“ One day I called at Lord Roselyn’s house; I was admitted, and found Agnes alone; this rarely happened, as she generally had her boy, and frequently his *gouvernante*, in the room. She looked sadder than I had ever seen her before, and I thought I saw the trace of a tear on her cheek. Oh! why could I not kneel before her, and take her hand in mine, and bid her be comforted? She tried to be cheerful as usual, but while she spoke, her eyes filled up, and she turned over some drawings on the table to hide her emotion. I had been more than mortal had I withstood her tears—in one moment I was at her feet; I had

seized her hand, and poured forth the tale of my love—my sufferings—my devotion—my despair. At first she remained motionless; she seemed struck with sudden insensibility; then, recovering herself, she sprang from me, and stood aloof, her graceful figure drawn to its full height, her eyes flashing, her lips compressed, her cheek covered with burning blushes—there was a pause.

“ ‘Rise, sir,’ she said, ‘and leave the room.’

“ I rose, but did not approach her. I told her I asked nothing, I hoped for nothing, but her forgiveness and her pity. I told her I would never more offend by word or look; that I never had intended to avow my passion, and I prayed but for one word of pardon before I quitted her presence. While I spoke, her manner changed, and, as I concluded, she came forward, and giving me her hand, she said, ‘I forgive you, but remember the conditions.’

“ I left her presence with a determination never to enter it again. That night I gave orders for immediate preparations for going abroad. I felt I could not remain in England: I could not go on meeting her almost daily, as I had hitherto done; nor yet could I have the resolution to avoid her. Happiness I could never hope to obtain, but I might acquire fortitude to endure mis-

ery ; at least, both for her sake and my own, I would make the effort.

“ Before my departure, I wrote to her, telling her my resolution, detailing every circumstance, and once more entreating her pardon for the act into which I had been hurried.

“ I received the following reply :—

“ ‘ I approve highly of your resolution ; I forgive you from my heart, and trust that time will restore to you tranquillity. Receive my best wishes, and believe me

“ ‘ Your sincere friend,

“ ‘ A. R.’

“ The following day I left England. I travelled for about a year on the continent, hurrying from place to place to fly from myself and my miseries ; but the memory of Agnes was never for a moment absent : the tones of her voice were forever ringing in my ear : the expression of those soft eyes—of her smile—of her every look —was vividly engraved on my heart. Her picture and those few parting lines were treasures not all the wealth of Golconda could purchase ; I clung to them as the records of a love that began and continued in sorrow, and could end only in death.

“ Thus passed away the first year of my pilgrimage. I made no attempt to conquer the passion that possessed my whole being—I nursed it

in secret and in tears. I could have no consolation, for I had no hope. To me the future was but a dreary continuation of the wretched present; the memory of the past was all that was left to me, and was there aught in it that could bring comfort? Some there are who make to themselves a destiny—others who follow the course of their fate: I might have been of the former class, but my natural indolence of disposition placed me among the latter. I had never struggled—I had never resisted an impulse, but had yielded to every circumstance, not without a murmur, but without an effort to *master* circumstances. After a time I began to perceive that my life had been hitherto completely thrown away: I weighed what I was against what I might have been, and, oh, how was I found wanting! I am sure I could never have found happiness, but I might have found greatness—I might have enjoyed the triumph of gratified ambition—I might have raised for myself a name that future generations would reverence. Such I *might* have been, I *might* have done; and what was I?—a broken-hearted exile, wandering hither and thither over the earth, flying from what?—seeking for what?—spending youth, health, talents, on what?—leading an aimless, useless, miserable life!

“I thought of all this, and my dormant spirit rose. I said within myself, ‘I have long yielded

— now will I learn to conquer ! ' I no longer pursued the course of solitary and desultory ramblings that I had hitherto followed : I sought the great capitals ; I mingled with the highest and most distinguished men of each ; I applied myself to the studies and pursuits best calculated to improve my taste, cultivate my mind, and place me on the road to vie with those I envied and admired.

“ All this could not fail to produce a salutary effect : by degrees I became more of a rational and thinking being, instead of the wretched, hopeless dreamer I had so long been ; even my love for Agnes assumed a different character ; I thought how much more worthy I was to love her ; I flattered myself that the course I was now pursuing was one she would approve. I knew so well her kind and gentle nature, that I was convinced it would please her to know that my passion for her was no longer the cause of utter despair and endless misery to me ; and this went far to console me.

“ But still there were times when all my old feelings of bitterness returned. What could all this be to me ? I lived but for her, and she did not love me — she never would love me — nay, worse, ten thousand times worse, she loved another ! Had she been equally insensible to all as to me, I could have borne it ; I should only have to en-

dure grief and regret; but to think that she was possessed of the warmest affections—the deepest sensibility—that love in its fullest and purest sense filled her heart—and that all this was given to another! Oh the tortures of frantic jealousy that wrung my soul at this thought! And, perhaps, while I was flattering myself that my present efforts were such as would please her, she had forgotten my existence, or at least looked back upon the past as connected with me merely as a disagreeable passage, of which she wished to lose the memory.

“Thus, alternately hoping and fearing, trusting and despairing, another year passed away; and when a third was gone, I determined to return once more to England. I thought that now I was so completely master of myself and of my passions, that I could even venture into her presence, that I could look at her, and speak to her, and hear her voice, without betraying emotion. I felt sure that I could rely on my own strength; and immediately I prepared for my homeward journey.

“A day or two after my arrival, I met Lady C—— in Grosvenor Square: she was as brilliant, as gay and as beautiful as ever. She congratulated me on my return, asked me a thousand questions without waiting for an answer, and would not let me go until I had promised to go to

her ball, which was to take place next night. I promised, and, with one of her bright smiles, she bade me adieu.

"I went to the ball: the light, the noise, the crowd distracted me; I felt sick, and sad, and *ennuyé*. There was no one I cared to see—nothing I wished to hear; and I was just meditating a retreat, when through the crowd I discerned one figure—it was Agnes! I believe I turned deadly pale, for some of those who were near me looked at me with affright; I trembled so violently that I was obliged to cling to a pillar for support—a mist floated before my eyes—my heart throbbed as though each beat counted one of the last moments of my existence; but by a violent effort I recovered myself. Was it for this, I thought, that I had spent so many months in struggling with myself?—that I had striven day and night against my own weakness, my own passions? No! I had learnt to conquer! and now was the moment to achieve the greatest victory of all!

"I crossed the room and approached her: she saw me, and holding out her hand, said, with one of her sweetest smiles, 'Ah! you are welcome home; tell me where you have been, and how you are, after all your wanderings?'

"'Thank you for the welcome,' I said; 'my travels have done me a world of good; indeed,

I have quite *recovered*,' I added, significantly, and I did not blush as the lie passed my lips. She understood me, and we began to talk of my travels, &c. Her presence had not lost its soothing spell: I felt calm and happy as I used to do beneath the holy influence that hung around her; but this was not to last. Her husband (I found I hated him as bitterly as formerly) came up: he, too, was all kindness and congratulations; hoped to see me often, &c. ; and I smiled, and said how happy I should be to renew my visits, and paid him to the full his elaborate civility. And then he said it was late, and, giving his arm to Agnes, bade me good-night; and she smiled kindly, and shook my hand at parting; and—I cannot tell what followed—I——"

* * * * *

Here the manuscript ends—nearly with the life of the author. On that memorable night the unfortunate young man shot himself. His remains were discovered the next morning, fearfully disfigured; the face it was impossible to recognize.

Thus died one who, from his talents, fortune, and station, might have been one of the brightest ornaments of society; but who, from indolence and want of proper guidance in early youth, became a miserable and useless being, and died a frightful and unnatural death.

THE GRECIAN WIFE.

MISS LOUISA HENRIETTA SHERIDAN

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1848; American Periodicals

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THE GRECIAN WIFE.

BY MISS LOUISA HENRIETTA SHERIDAN.

IN the summer of 1832, an English party, consisting of a lady, her son and daughter, prevailed on me to accompany them on a voyage to the Mediterranean, professedly to explore the beauties of its shores, but in reality to try the effect of sea air for the invalid Clara, the youthful idol of our circle, whose gently expressed wish for my society had all the power of a command ; and, after a prosperous passage along the coast of Italy, their commodious yacht brought us among those themes of ancient and modern song, the Greek Isles. The novel scenery, with the luxuriant vegetation of its exquisite climate, enchanted our invalid ; and Ypsarà appearing to elicit her strongest preference, we decided on reposing there after our voyage, and took a temporary residence near Ajio Sotira ; from hence we daily made excursions to places inaccessible for a carriage ; Clara being frequently induced by her picturesque enthusiasm to overtask her failing strength.

Having often heard of the remarkable view

from Mount Mavrovouni, she was tempted, one cool grey morning, to visit it early with Frederick and myself; and we remained sketching from different points, unmindful of the sultry glory of a southern midday sun, until, turning to address Clara, I perceived she had fainted over her spirited sketch. In great alarm, Frederick bore her toward a sequestered villa we had previously remarked, while I almost flew up the path before him, to solicit assistance, until a sudden turn brought me beneath a verandah, and in presence of a young Greek lady.

Never shall I forget the noble vision of loveliness which met my gaze, as I breathlessly explained, and apologized for, my intrusion. In all the majestic freshness of early womanhood, she was seated watching the slumber of a cherub boy, whose rounded cheek was pillow'd by her arm: her costume, of the richest materials, selected with the skill of a painter, consisted of a *foustanella* of the lightest green satin, under an open *guna* robe of violet velvet, starred and embroidered in gold, and displaying her swan-like neck and bust, covered by a pearl network; the small *fessi-cap* of crimson velvet, encircled with gold zechins, was lightly placed on her profuse silken black hair; and, as she listened, my request was already answered from the depths of her soft, lustrous eyes, ere her reply, in the purest Italian, could find utterance.

Clara was soon established on the gorgeously-rayed couch, and recalled by the gentle cares so gracefully bestowed by the fair Greek, whose infant charge, now awnke and gayly lisping, had nestled into my arms, and was archly misleading my efforts to pronounce his name, Polizoides, correctly. His joyous exclamation first made us aware of the arrival of an officer, of slight, elegant, and very youthful appearance, so strikingly like our lovely entertainer, that I asked, with almost certainty, "*Il vostro Fratello, Signora?*" A blush of pleasure accompanied her smiling reply, "*No; il mio Marito, Lochagos* Mavromikális.*"

The boy was instantly in his father's arms, who welcomed us with a graceful and high-bred cordiality; and we prolonged our stay while he discoursed on the stirring themes of national interest, with all the impetuous energy natural to his youth, his country, and profession of arms; the fond eyes of Anastásoula, no longer languid, echoing his rapid eloquence with their kindling flash, indicating the possession of woman's most beautiful and most fatal gift, intense feeling. So charmed were we with these youthful lovers, (who we found were also orphan cousins,) that their animated wish for increasing our intimacy was met with equal fervor. We found both were

**Lochagos*, captain.

highly gifted, and exceedingly well informed ; and from that time scarcely a day passed without a visit or note between us.

About six weeks after this occurrence, Frederick Vernon came in hastily one morning, looking agitated and deadly pale ; Clara, with an invalid's perception, eagerly demanded the cause.

" The whole town is ringing with a spirited but most hapless act of Mavromikális," he replied ; " he was ordered by *Ektatos** Koliopoulos to march with his regiment against Ajio Steffano, which happens to be his native village, inhabited by his relations and family retainers ; he calmly requested an exchange of duty for some other not requiring a personal conflict against the actual ties of nature ; but he was coarsely ordered to march instantly, or surrender his sword as a traitor to his party. Highly excited by this unexpected alternative, he hesitated, and remained silent, when a foreign officer advancing, laid his hand on the sword, saying, superciliously, ' Lochagos, you must renounce that of which you make no use ! ' Mavromikális felled him to the earth, drew the sword, and saying, ' it should never be stained by himself, or disgraced by another,' he snapped the blade, and threw it at the feet of the commanding officer."

" Knowing his impetuous character," said

Ektatos, governor.

Clara, " I can scarcely blame him ; but what will be the result ? "

" Alas ! there is no uncertainty, dearest ; guilty of having rebelled against orders, and of striking his superior officer, he is taken to the Fort prison, and by the Greek military code, the sentence of *death* is inevitable ! "

* * * * *

On recovering from the first shock of this overwhelming intelligence, I proceeded to the villa ; here a hurried and defaced note from Anastásoula awaited me, stating, " she had gone to seek the aid of a distant friend, alone and disguised, lest she might be intercepted." Sadly I returned home, and found Frederick had sought admission to the prisoner in the Fort ; but this the foreign sentinel had refused, coarsely saying, " It would be time enough to see him three days hence, when led forth for execution ! "

As a last resource, we framed a petition to the stern Ektatos, signed by the English and leading Greeks ; but he replied, the state of regimental insubordination was such, that he had been waiting to make a striking example of a man of rank and influence, such as Mavromikális, and therefore all interference was in vain.

* * * * *

The awful ceremonial of death was arranged in all its melancholy solemnity ; the soldiers,

looking pale from their distressing duty, stood silent as the grave. A movement arose among the crowding spectators, and the prisoner was led forth, no longer in that uniform which had proved so fatal, but habited in the flowing tunic and vest of his native place; this, however, did not conceal the hasty ravages of sorrow on his young frame, hitherto firm though slight, but now devoid of elasticity as he mournfully stepped towards the doomed square. For the first time he raised his head, and looking towards heaven was soon lost in mental prayer; then murmurs at his extreme beauty came from the crowd, and while their anxiety was at its most painful height, a peasant girl pressed in front of the line, setting down a lovely boy, who joyously bounded towards the condemned, exclaiming, "*Mamma! my own mamma again!*"

That sound caused an electric change in the bearing of the prisoner, whose abstracted thoughts were recalled to earth by nature's soft bonds; the long, long embrace, the hysterical maternal cry of "*My boy! my boy!*" proved to the spectators that the unerring perception of affection had exceeded theirs, and taught the infant boy to discover, in the disguised prisoner, his own loved mother, whose life he had thus preserved!

Having failed in all her appeals for pardon, Anastásoula had effected her entrance into the

fort, disguised so that even the prisoner did not recognize her; and, professing to be an agent of his wife's, had prevailed on him to escape, and conceal himself on board Vernon's yacht, where, she added, his family would join him. He effected all she had well arranged by faithful agents; but he little thought that his heart's treasure was to be the price of his deliverance; he had even experienced a half-reproachful regret that Anastásoula had not risked a personal interview to cheer him for his perilous undertaking;—so seldom does man divine the devotion of woman, or guess the ecstasy arising from self-sacrifice for an idolized object, intense in proportion to the extent of what she has relinquished; for the woman who adores, there is but one hopeless suffering, the desolating conviction of having lost the heart which has cast its spells over her first affections.

* * * * *

Ektatos Koliopoulos, on learning the exchange, and concluding the rebel was beyond his reach, withdrew from the manifestations of popular feeling; and the heroic Anastásoula was borne, nearly lifeless, to our house. Her alabaster skin had been stained to the deep tint of her husband's, and the resemblance made complete by the sacrifice of her luxuriant tresses, so that nothing but childhood's instinct could have discovered

her. We soon after received a private intimation, from the cautious Ektatos, that he had commuted the sentence of death for instant banishment from Ypsarà ; and having no ties there, we hastily broke up our establishment, carrying away our Greek friends, whom we left to retirement and affection at Tenedos.

* * * * *

Our English party were at Corfu in 1833, when the Governor gave an entertainment to the young Otho, on his route to take possession of his new kingdom. I had the honor of waltzing with this good-natured, plain, flat-featured, Moorish-looking prince, (whom I found, like myself, much fonder of dancing than politics, and who, whatever sort of king he may be, is one of the best waltzing partners in Europe, which is much more agreeable;) I took an opportunity to relate the foregoing trait of his new nation ; and, as I felt that no waltz-loving prince could refuse a petition while dancing to "The Notre-dame," I made mine in such effective terms that I had the pleasure, soon afterwards, of adding a bright ornament to his court in the fascinating Anastásoula, the devoted young GREEK WIFE.

THE HEROINE OF THE HUON.

Gillies, Mary Leman

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1849; American Periodicals

pg. 108

THE HEROINE OF THE HUON.

BY MARY LEMAN GILLIES.

IT was a bright spring morning when the signal at Mount Nelson announced a ship in sight, and immediately the yellow flag was hoisted at Mulgrave battery, and proclaimed the welcome news to the inhabitants of Hobart Town. Those of London, that emporium in which culminate all the great interests of existence, could but poorly imagine the emotions excited by the event. Expectation was on tiptoe; the vessel might be from Sydney, from India, above all, it might be from England. At the period of my story all were exiles. Natives, save the dark race which is fast disappearing before the white man, there were none. All, I repeat, were exiles, but all were not *penal* exiles. The exiles to whom I allude were those settlers whom step-dame fortune had driven from their father-land, or whom the hope of winning her favor had allured from it. All these had left their loves and dearest interests behind them, and all their dreams and wishes were directed to the fair fields and bright firesides of their childhood. It is now far otherwise. Van Diemen's Land, like other

lands, has grown national, with the usual exclusive prejudices and partialities. Beautiful girls and gallant youths, born in its sweet valleys, have ripened into womanhood, have become surrounded by a young progeny, and they love the land of their own and their children's birth in a manner impossible to their fathers, to whom it was but the land of adoption.

If the approaching bark was anticipated by many a beating heart in Hobart Town and its vicinity, what were the feelings of those on board the Dart, the gallant ship that had now been nearly five months from England? It carried a miscellaneous assemblage of passengers, and had touched at Cork to take in some women and children who were going to join their husbands and fathers in the colony. In all this freight of humanity there were two women singularly remarkable: the one, Dora Callan, for beauty; the other, Bridget Ryan, for an extreme ugliness, which would have been repulsive, had it not been redeemed by honesty, simplicity, and good nature. She had an infant of a few weeks old, to which she was a tender, watchful mother; but it did not engross her genial heart. She had a kind word for every one, and a helping hand for all who needed her aid: the sick found her ready to forego her rest to soothe his sufferings, and the sorrowing never called upon her sympathy.

in vain; and it was soon the feeling of all on board to seek Bridget Ryan under any emergency of annoyance or distress. But, above all, she became to Dora Callan the very stay and prop of her existence: the young creature had come on board in bad health, and with the prospect of becoming a mother, a prospect realized before they were many weeks at sea. In her hour of trial who was beside her? Bridget Ryan. When the new-born made its feeble appeal to its feeble mother, who took it to a cherishing breast? Bridget Ryan. Amid all her own and her infant's wants, she found the means to minister to the wants of the young mother and her nursling; amid all the claims upon her time and toil, she found hours to devote to them.

"Bridget Ryan," said Dora, "I shall never see the far land we are seeking, and one is waiting me there to whom it will be a sore sorrow. Here is his last letter, which I have read every night after my prayers, and every morning as soon as it was light. He will be on the watch for our ship, and among the first on board."

"Heaven speed him, my woman!" exclaimed the cheerful Bridget, "and won't he be proud of the gift you have for him?" she added, looking at the sleeping child; "oh, sure and it is I must be at the merry meeting."

“Who has such right, Bridget? But it will never be.”

“Tush, woman dear, tush! Don’t talk such nonsense, child. It is the *wakeness* that has come over you. Wait a while, and a blithe christening we’ll have when we are once on shore.”

The young mother bowed her beautiful face upon her pillow, and the heaving of her breast revealed the emotion that convulsed her. After an effort at composure, she raised herself in the bed and flung her arms around the neck of her friend.

“Oh, on this wide, wide sea, where I thought to find only danger and sorrow, I have found a friend like unto the mother I have left. You will have her blessing, Bridget, and *his*. Oh, that I might live to tell him all I owe you!”

“Now, Dora, dear, if you go on after this manner,” said Bridget, struggling with emotion, and gently trying to disengage herself, “what will I do! Sure I shall be fit for nothing this blessed day—and the babes, too—why we are changing places with them, and crying, as if they could not do it much better than we. Take heart, woman dear, the boy will need all your care.”

“All yours, Bridget, all yours. Oh! tell me you will never forsake him. I know it, I feel it, he will soon be alone with you—have only you. Oh, let him creep to your heart when the salt

sea covers his mother. Nay, Bridget, you shall not unclasp my hands till I have your promise ; say that in danger, in distress, in sickness, he shall be to you as your own."

"Mother of God, be my witness !" fervently ejaculated Bridget. "He shall have half my heart, half my strength. When I forego my hold of him, sorrow be my portion. But you will live, Dora Callan, and my child may call you mother by *manes* of this boy of ours ; for now he is mine, you see, and I *mane* to dispose of him."

A faint smile played upon the lips of the sinking girl in answer to this sportive sally, and then closing her eyes, she folded her hands upon her breast in silent prayer. The prophetic spirit in which the young creature had spoken was soon apparent. A rapid change passed over the fair face ; the power of utterance suddenly failed ; but while life lingered her grateful and beseeching eyes were raised to the face of Bridget, at whose breast the creature so soon to be orphaned nestled in comfort.

The next night a white hammock was lowered into the sea beneath the solemn starlight. The passengers and crew stood round whilst the captain read the funeral service ; his voice often faltered, and at intervals a deep sob was heard ; it burst from the bosom of Bridget Ryan, who,

with both children clasped in her arms, kneeled upon the deck. When the solemn ceremony was over, and the fair form of Dora had sunk many fathoms to its deep and silent grave, a low wail of excessive anguish broke from the lips of Bridget.

“Dora Callan! Dora Callan!” she at length uttered, with a deep fervency of tone which was in itself eloquence; “why have you gone from me — from me whose heart loved you like its life? But who may keep what the Great Maker wants? Bright be your place among the angels — welcome be your fair face where all is beautiful! Och! shall I ever forget how sweet you were, how kind, how loving! When you wake from your great winding-sheet, Dora mine, may we, who mourn you now, meet you rejoicing.”

Then her voice sunk till its murmurs became inaudible; while rocking herself to and fro on the deck, she covered over the children and bathed them with her tears. Impressed by the scene, all stood in deep silence, watching the subsiding struggles of her grief. Almost unmarked a change of weather had gradually come on, and a more than common activity on board declared that some exigency was approaching. Low winds seemed from afar gathering the clouds that soon overspread the sky, till the hollow dismal wailings became long howls, and

hoarse shrieks, and the darkness grew into blackest night. Oh, for the pen of Cooper to portray the storm which broke above the devoted ship, while it reeled and staggered amid the rage of contending winds and boiling seas! The captain and the crew did their duty firmly. Perhaps there is no energy, no courage, equal to that of the English sailor; no sense of duty so high, so perfectly, so nobly fulfilled. Vain were all their efforts; the sea surged above the yards, sweeping down on the doomed bark, which would bravely rise again and again above the briny deluge. Desperately she ploughed her wild way, till at midnight she became a total wreck on one of the small islands in D'Entrecastreux's channel.

The morning broke at length, but it came rather to reveal than to relieve their distress. When the vessel struck, a shriek, compounded of many wild voices, pierced the thick darkness; the masts went by the board, a rushing sea swept the deck, carrying many despairing wretches into the engulfing waters; but with the grey drear light of morning came a lull. The captain, who still survived, with some few of the passengers and crew, felt deep anxiety for the fate of Bridget, and was seeking her, inquiring for her, when she crept forth with the two children in her arms. "The bravest heart on board,

by heavens!" he exclaimed, as he beheld her. "Hope on," he continued, springing forward, "we are descried; there are boats making towards us!" At these words Bridget started to her feet, just as a tremendous wave struck the ship, and, sweeping the deck, carried her and the children overboard. Much is said of human selfishness in the emergencies of great danger, and much is of course exhibited, but so powerfully had Bridget's example and beauty of character impressed her fellow-sufferers, that the most vital interest was felt in her fate, and, at this catastrophe, many cried aloud, "Save her! Save her!" while at the moment hopeless of saving themselves. The boats, which had put off from Brune Island, redoubled their efforts. Bridget succeeded in grasping a fragment of timber, and thus kept herself afloat; the heavy rain, which had been some time falling, increasing, refreshed her, and the sea subsided, as if calmed by the tears of heaven; the cheering voices of the approaching men kept alive the pulses of her heart, and at last Bridget and the children were rescued, the little helpless creatures, wonderful to relate, alive. This, however, she scarcely was herself; yet amid what were apparently the pangs of death, her sense of duty was still paramount. Carried on shore, soothing voices and succoring hands were soon around her, but she

made a feeble effort to retain the children, while she exclaimed, with what strength remained to her, "Michael Callan." The name was repeated aloud by those who marked her anxiety, and immediately a young man, who had helped to man the boat that saved her, pressed eagerly forward. "Here I am," he cried; "what would you with Michael Callan?" He was directed to the dying woman; he knelt down beside her. Bridget opened her eyes, which a moment before had been closing in the last extreme of exhaustion and faintness, "Are you he?" she asked. "I am, Michael Callan." "Now the Father of mercy and all ~~the~~ saints be praised!" she faintly ejaculated. "Michael Callan, here is your child — DORA'S CHILD!" and with these words her long sustained energies forsook her, and she sunk insensible into the arms of the people near her.

The story soon spread through the colony, and by the time Bridget was restored to health and strength, she found herself possessed of a little fortune. All who like herself had survived the wreck, bore testimony to her Christian charity and heroism, and from every quarter of the island subscriptions in her behalf poured in. Her home was on the banks of the Huon; thither every year Michael Callan and his boy make a pilgrimage to the fond friend of Dora, and the faithful preserver of her child.

THE JILT.

MISS LOUISA H SHERIDANMARY ST JOHN

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1848; American Periodicals
pg. 200

THE JILT.

BY MISS LOUISA H. SHERIDAN.

“WHAT is the first mortification which a *debutante* in society is likely to encounter?” asked Mary St. John; who, having attained to the ease of her third ball, was just venturing to be herself.

“To a proud nature like yours,” I replied, “the first mortification will be the discovery that any man, young or old, handsome or ugly, clever or stupid, to whom you are commonly civil, will fancy you have a design on his hand.”

“Well, that *would* be vexatious!” she returned incredulously, with a slight toss of her lofty head; “but as I wish to dance through several seasons without having any preference, (except for agreeable dancers,) I shall make no distinctions on which vanity could find the smallest resting-place.”

“That system will not save you; they will class you as a general flirt, seeking the best *parti*, under the guise of good-tempered indifference. Every old sop, every purple-handed ‘Westminster lad,’ will talk as though he could obtain your alliance at the first offer.”

"Oh, horrible! You will drive me into a nunnery, rather than serve for gossip among 'match discussers,' who seem to think one can't look happy without some design. I know what I will do;—I will talk to married men only, and thus defeat all evils."

"Worse and worse!" I replied, to the mortification of my experimentalist: "the feeling of security in conversing with married men imparts a friendly ease to the tone of young women, which is often misinterpreted, when you would think it impossible."

"But I would be equally intimate with their wives," persevered Mary, ere she gave up this new plan.

"It would be an unfriendly intimacy on one side," I replied. "Women, though painfully convinced that their husbands have long ceased to care for them, experience fresh pain or mortification at each fancied instance of their wandering momentary attention. To every wife we will allow a clique of three or four female friends; and these would unsparingly sting you to death in society, if you adopted your patent-safety-conversation system."

"Then what course will save me from the alternative of a wound to my pride, or a slander on my morals?" she inquired, gravely; and as my store of worldly experience did not furnish me

with a reply, I was "right glad" to see a handsome partner lead her away at the moment.

"A pretty dilemma for that lively, high-spirited creature!" exclaimed a voice behind me; and I recognized the agreeable cynic, Colonel Wentworth, with whom I had vowed an eternal friendly feud. "Your maxims will draw upon her the dislike of our sex; for, notwithstanding our grumbling, we like you creatures to spread your nets around our paths. A woman who, from any cause, omits the usual pains to please a man, derives no credit with him for her motive, for he always decides she had not the power of being more agreeable!"

"And yet, I am sure, you must know that I have the power of being more agreeable than I make myself to you," I said, daring my foe.

"By no means. You take all this trouble to be *piquante*, because you fancy I like a Beatrice!" he replied, walking away with a provoking look.

A prolonged attendance on a beloved invalid, and the retirement consequent on their loss, made me almost a stranger to the occurrences of society, when my friends urged me to reenter it, to shake off the unhealthy apathy of my mind.

From a shady, quiet corner of a ball-room I recognized many fair creatures passing, whom a few years in the world had sadly altered. Instead

of the gentle reply of former days, they commenced sparkling conversations, shook hands intimately with most men, wore less blond over their shoulders, and called attention to the actions of "that naughty Mrs. B——," or "how silly Lady C—— was with George Forester;" the young men being all designated by their Christian names.

Colonel Wentworth, who had discovered my retreat, assisted my memory in many instances, where change of fashion, &c., confused me; and he was delighted at the opportunity which my ignorance afforded for his cynical descriptions; although, in revenge for former injuries, I told him such questions proved that my estimate of his conversation was only "up to Court-Guide point."

In the midst of one of his lively tirades against women, I became so lost in speculation that I forgot to reply. Seated apart I saw a lady whose countenance I seemed to know as in a dream; her expression was sad thoughtfulness, at times almost painful; she was in mourning, and evidently an invalid, from the affectionate interest evinced by her own sex, the chair beside her being occupied in succession by all those whose esteem I knew to be valuable, and who seemed lavish in their kindness to her.

Colonel Wentworth impatiently followed the direction of my eyes, and he exclaimed, "Oh,

you recognize your former pupil, although she has braided up her flowing hair like a coquette *en pénitence*; and she has left off her eternal laughter, ever since she behaved so ill."

"Mary St. John," I replied, "behaved ill! What *can* you mean?—for she has been affectionately greeted by all the best of her own sex in the room."

"No doubt *they* have some fine name for her conduct," he replied petulantly; "but, take the word of a man of the world, she is an arrant JILT!"

To me, this coarse but too-frequent phrase conveys so much worldliness, false hopes, nay, deliberate deceit, that I felt my heart close against my former friend, though her appearance had awakened my interest. Colonel Wentworth, satisfied with "the capital hit," as he would have termed it, had gone off ere I recovered from my astonishment; so I could obtain no particulars, but sat chafing on the hateful appellation.

While ruminating on the difference between my imaginary portrait of a flirting, heartless "jilt," and the quiet manner, quite devoid of coquetry, of the party before me, she chanced to recognize me across the room; and, with the frank smile which had won my regard in former days, she made a signal for my approach.

"You are very good to come over," said she,

extending both hands, "but I am not strong enough to cross the room. The cause of my presence at this *soirée* is, that I am a visiter in the house."

My greeting, I fancy, was not what she expected; for Miss St. John seemed painfully surprised, and, after a constrained attempt at conversation, she said, "I am going to ask you a favor: will you call on me here early to-morrow, to indulge an invalid in talking of old times; and I will release you now, as you seem tired?"

I assented, with the best grace I could summon, and gladly withdrew.

How strange it is, that after a separation, (sometimes of only a few months,) we do not resume an intimacy at exactly the degree where we left off. Between lovers this is the least felt, because there is a plentitude of happiness in each other's presence, which, needing few words, does not betray embarrassment. But the most attached friends must own they have experienced this awkward, stupid, sensation, which has caused them to utter commonplace phrases, while their thoughts were full of affection and themes of mutual interest; and neither dared to commence the latter, as though some estrangement had occurred between minds which had parted under perfect understanding.

On the following morning, being desirous of having my visit over, I went very early to call on Miss St. John, and found the drawing-rooms unoccupied ; but from a boudoir, at the extreme of the second room, I heard her singing. The well-known contralto voice had lost most of its power ; and the accompaniment was executed with a feeble hand.

The sad melody, I well remembered, was a composition of her own—as doubtless were the words—which consisted of an affectionate address to her mother, her only relative.

How strange, I thought bitterly, that the heart can be alive to one beautiful affection, and yet ruthlessly sport with the unpaid attachment of another ! I would not allow the stanzas to have full influence against my dislike to my former friend, but entered the boudoir ere she had concluded.

Tears were in her eyes, but she greeted me with much feeling ; and ere I had time to summon one of the before-named horrid common-places of embarrassment, she said—

“ I am deeply pained by the change in your manner, which, as I have done nothing to deserve it, must be the result of something you have heard.”

I endeavored to wave the discussion, but she resumed,—

"I can guess what has shocked your frank, straightforward character ; some one has told you the report that I am a *jilt*."

"They have," I replied ; "and I shall be too happy to hear you have never given cause for the distinction."

I shall never forget the look of pain, distress, and sorrow, (yet unmixed with self-reproach,) which accompanied her faint, slow words : "I *have* given the world cause thus to mistake me, in *two* instances !"

I had come with an unacknowledged hope of hearing a single accusation satisfactorily denied : I received, instead, a confession of a double perfidy ! I did not wait for the invalid to recover from her passion of tears ; but, without further comment, I left the house.

On reaching home, I learnt that Colonel Wentworth had used the privilege of an old friend, by inviting himself to tea, *en famille*, with us in the evening. He arrived in high spirits, and seemed intent on having a laughing skirmish regarding Miss St. John ; as he had heard, in the morning I was gone to visit her.

I was too much preoccupied and vexed to maintain any position against him ; and when a letter was brought to me, I gladly availed myself of his request that I would not defer its perusal. The writing, though changed from weakness, I

at once recognized as Miss St. John's. The letter was as follows:—

“ Your good opinion is of so much value to me, my early friend, that I infringe on a strict prohibition against the fatigue of writing, in order to explain my startling declaration of this morning; the very indignation you then showed being a fresh tie to bind you to me.

“ The false judgment of the world, in nine cases out of ten, does not arise from its erroneous standard of right and wrong, but from the fact that the worst people take most pains to tell their own histories to advantage, while the really well-intentioned take the least heed of appearances.

“ Having all my life acted on strict, unshaken principles, and obtained the approbation of all those I value, I would not heed any idle gossip of society—of which, indeed, I have no reason to complain—except its misapplication, in my case, of the coarse and unamiable epithet of a *jilt*, which, however unmerited, would shock any woman of feeling. To prove how little my conduct would deserve it, is my motive for addressing you.

“ Shortly after your painful duty called you from society, we went into the country, where I received a proposal of marriage from an intelligent person, possessing many excellent qualities. I did not wish, however, to marry so early from

my happy home ; nor would the individual have suited my romantic taste ; therefore I declined it, decidedly, and in writing, so as to prevent mistake.

“ You are aware of my isolated position, without father or brother, to whom the visits of young men might be paid ; hence we are precluded from knowing any very intimately, and from acquiring any knowledge of their habits and pursuits elsewhere.

“ The individual, however, who had honored me by his preference, requested that he might be allowed, as a friend, to visit still at our house ; and, in consequence of his estimable character, mamma willingly conceded to him the privilege of our sincere regard.

“ This increased intimacy naturally extended to his family, who were many in number, various in disposition, but all equally unpopular in society.

“ I consider a man or woman, who marries into a numerous family, has a proportionately decreased chance of happiness. Setting aside the variety of new connections they will bring, which may prove ineligible, there is an impossibility—without deceit—of pleasing a large family : the non-contents, whose vanity has not been won, are the most active in the family-jury ; so the verdict is unfavorable against the stranger.

Large families, like military-messes, keep their regard for their own members, and often care for none besides.

"As I had no near relative who might be unsuited to any individual I married, my wish would naturally be to meet one nearly as free. I had seen woman's wedded happiness less frequently destroyed by her husband's conduct, than by his relations. When these disliked her, they knew so well what trifles would most affect him, on which they would enlarge; and even sensible men are so much swayed by early habit, that they coincide with those whom they have known and deemed right from infancy.

"In the country, I was reading and studying closely after London idleness, and my friend, being scientific, was a sort of fraternal reference in my studies. I was too busy, then, to notice the idle witticisms on his attachment; or to heed the appearance of encouragement (in the world's estimation) which our intimacy might give to the hopes I had decidedly ended, and which I thought time had subdued without the pain of a direct reference on either side. Guess, then, my sorrow—my distress—when, long after resuming my London habits, I received an appeal as to what my feelings then were! Not a moment did I lose in correcting the error; and the party, with noble candor, acquitted me of any share in

the mistake into which he had unfortunately led himself.

“ With this decision on my conduct, from the only person who could judge it, I heeded little the term of ‘jilt,’ which I was told some of the malicious applied to it. But my regret for the unreturned attachment of that excellent person distressed me so deeply, that I had a long and severe illness in consequence.

“ Woman’s vanity is wounded by finding the love insincere which has been professed for her. But to find she has unconsciously given rise to an honest attachment, which she cannot return, wounds all her better feelings, and therefore the pain is more enduring.

“ I now began to doubt the possibility of friendship between man and woman; and I almost resolved on being ‘the coquette of many acquaintance,’ such as you once described. But, as my letter must be confined to the two cases liable to misrepresentation, I pass to the proposal of another individual, in whom, while only an acquaintance, we saw nothing objectionable among many advantages.

“ The most sincere natures become deceitful under love’s influence: the very wish to please makes them study the other’s opinions, and temporarily adopt them as the best. How, then, can woman judge of the disposition and habits of a

man whom she only sees in society, or as a visiter, while he is studying to anticipate her wishes and tastes? Add to this the tendency of our sex to believe in goodness until we discover its reverse, our favorable judgment for those who profess love for us, and our blind confidence in the perfection of those who gain our attachment.

“ This difficulty becomes almost an impossibility to those who have no near male relatives. Men are ‘true’ to each other, (unless envious or jealous,) and will not hesitate to apply the term ‘a capital fellow,’ to any companion, about whom a question is asked, except by their own relations.

“ Women, not being responsible, are less cautious respecting each other; so that a man can have no difficulty in obtaining any information regarding her whom he admires. ‘Her dearest female friend’ will tell him all she knows, (at the least,) either in confidence or vexation. Besides, female conduct and education is so well regulated here, that they seldom differ much in reality from what their dispositions appear. Hence, men may safely make their election at once, and abide by it.

“ A conditional engagement of marriage is a sure test of man’s character, and should be made dependent on mutual esteem being undiminished

by a fixed time. *Of course, no woman of refined feeling would enter into even a conditional engagement, without having so high an opinion of the party, that an idea of change would seem to her almost beyond possibility.*

“ Security throws man off his guard : as uncertainty vanishes, temper and egotism gradually resume the degree of empire he has formerly allowed them. The novelty of pleasing decreases, and his real tastes and habits return. A conditional engagement also rouses supine or timid friends to communicate ‘ rough truths,’ which they withheld during the mere flirtation ; nay, even adversely interested parties, frequently through their ill-motived intelligence, prevent the wreck of a trusting woman’s happiness.

“ Let her, then, examine whether the faults be only of a venial, ordinary kind. If so, her own imperfections will make the balance equal ; therefore she may safely allow her affections to have the full approbation of her reason. Let her look with gentleness on mere common failings ; and only with a spirit of accommodating them, for any attempt at reform will destroy domestic happiness. And let her thank the Power which has ordained for her such a companion, whose respect she will be fortunate to retain, when romance on his side has ended.

“ But if the faults, unhappily, extend to *great*

moral and religious deficiency, or grave, unendurable defects of disposition, then, and *then only*, I consider she is justified in terminating an engagement which would end in misery to both. What blessing could follow her *perjury* of the sacred vow 'to love and honor,' in the instance of one who did not inspire either sentiment?

" The alternative will be almost death to a feeling woman ; but, whatever it costs, Heaven demands it ! Attachment, which outweighs worldly advantage, must fall before religion, though life be included in the sacrifice. Even the man for whom a woman might risk Almighty displeasure, would ungratefully, at last, class her devotedness to him as weakness of principle.

" But if man or woman violate their engagement for any lighter cause,—if either change for what they deem a better connexion, or from their worthless attachment having faded during the ordeal,—then, I say, let the finger of scorn, let the voice of contempt and loathing, be everywhere raised against them ! For JUDGMENT will surely fall (even in this world) on the perjured, guilty inflictor of unhappiness to another.

" My friend, after the opinions I have expressed, when I tell you I have broken off my conditional engagement, you will feel that I must have had powerful reasons. These matters being too sacred for a discussion, I can explain no further,

But lest you might, for a moment, think my resolve was strengthened by fastidiousness, I must state, that I was quite reconciled to my tastes for high intellectual society; music, literature, the fine arts, and the poetry and romance of nature, meeting with no echoing sympathy whatever: and although I would fain see the master of my destiny become one of the lights of the age—a star among his own rank, a raised statue for the multitude—I could have accommodated myself to what Mrs. Gore terms 'the demoralizing taste for inferior society,' the vanity which is only satisfied by undue flattery, such as inferiors in station or intellect will pay without appreciating what they praise.

"The deed is done: I am not going to improve my worldly position by a more advantageous connexion; and the struggle for my harassed mind has so undermined my health, that all discussion will soon be at rest forever! In these, my lingering, weary hours, you will give me the gratification of acquitting me of the hateful epithet which the ignorant may apply to the sufferer.

"MARY ST. JOHN."

THE OFFICER'S FUNERAL.

Lawson, Alice Anne

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1848; American Periodicals
pg. 219

THE OFFICER'S FUNERAL.

BY ALICE ANNE LAWSON.

RECOLLECTIONS ! how sweet and graceful is the word ! though it must be confessed sad and sorrowful meaning lies within it. Memory, thought, and recollection — terms synonymous — how witchingly do ye exercise your power over us — how deeply do ye dwell in our hearts ! And who would barter that treasure — the valuable, unpurchased blessing of recollection — for wealth, honor, or the world's favor ? — baubles — glittering toys, which shall lose their value, as custom renders them familiar, or fade into darkness and insignificance at sorrow's approach, or affliction's breath !

Ah, memory ! the volume whose leaves can never be read through, whose chapters continually furnish food for reflection, yet the subject never wearies ; and the keenest, most tender recollection is of that which has been the cause of greatest distress. Invariably we revert to that painful subject, dwelling on it again and again, until, with coloring cheeks and glistening eyes, we turn away in desperation to the most volatile amuse-

ment, or talk at random, to crush, for a time, thought and memory.

Not long ago, in a small company, some young girls being referred to about the exact time a friend had departed from among them, many voices answered carelessly, "I do not know," and "I forget." One sweet tone, quietly, in a half whisper, said, "On the first of March, two years now past." A pause, and again a murmur came, "I remember," followed by a sigh. The information had been given by one as young as any there; but the sadness of accent, the lid closing quietly over her eye, and, more than all, those words, "I remember," told me she had wept over some dream of bright hopes, while memory was to her a dear and sorrowful gift:—but to my tale.

It was on a scorching midsummer day, that the church-bell of K—— pealed forth its most melancholy notes; the sound, borne along on the air through the richly-planted burying-ground around, mellowed still more the sad musical wail. It was that last solemn requiem for a departed soul, telling that the cold and silent grave was about to close over a fellow-mortal, once full of life and energy like ourselves; that the tomb was about to hold within her chilling bosom, one who, perhaps, not long since, had been the gayest of the gay; whose smile had ever been the readiest; whose heart the warmest and kindest;

whose vacant place should long remain unfilled from very regret. The loud, clear-tongued harbinger of death and oblivion never rings out its chime without causing even the youngest and merriest amongst us to hush their noisy and gladsome mirth. It may be "the passing bell" will bring reflection to those who never thought before. And such must be the end of all! Rank, grandeur, riches, station, and talents, the world's highly prized deities, here ye can own no sovereignty; ye must fade away with your possessor. "The general doom is death!" and who shall hear a funeral bell without inquiring something about that person, now a captive in those fetters from which there is no escape? Some, from their windows arrest the passer-by, and eagerly ask information; in a neighbor's house the whole story will be told to others; while the curiosity of some may carry them to the place of interment.

But the church-bell of K——, for whom was it tolling? Was it for the old man, who, having lived to see four generations of his name, had dropped to sleep happily, with a smile on his lips, as he saw his children's children weeping for him? for every one who dies is wept by some mourner. Or was it the only and idolized son of the widow—her sole comfort and support—who was then shedding tears drawn from her

heart that she had not died instead of her beautiful child—her all of happiness—her mine of riches ? Or was the mourner a husband, who bent over the remains of his young wife, frantically kissing her icy lips and cheek, and then darting away in despair, as he remembered how she would, if awake, have returned the fond and earnest caress ? Again, was it pealing its sad music for a dear and valued friend, such as, in our youth, we cling to with single-mindedness and devotion—was the green sod to be placed over that true heart, making a desert of this beautiful world to another ? Or, perhaps, it was the warning that an angel had been received into glory ; for a child who had winged his way heavenward ; who should weep, then ? Had it not passed away in its beauty, without sin to answer for ? The parents of the fair-haired, blue-eyed infant shall sorrow : it was a link which bound their hearts closer together. But for none of these did the bell of K—— give the slow and measured note. It was for an officer's funeral !

Captain Elliott, of His Majesty's —— regiment, had died of malignant typhus fever, in the barracks, the day but one before. It was, therefore, thought advisable to inter him with all possible speed, lest, it being summer, and intensely hot, the troops should become infected.

If there be one funeral more melancholy and

subduing than another, it is a soldier's. The insignia of his order laying on his coffin, showing most plainly one from among the number had departed. The crape-bound mourners, his brothers in arms, with downcast eyes, and drooping heads, keeping time to the solemn march; the muffled drum sending forth its measured beat; the arms reversed; and the lowest in rank foremost, teaching us that death and the grave know no difference. The poorest and humblest private, the proud and aristocratic general officer, on whose breast glitter those dearly-earned badges of his profession, the tomb will open for all of ye, knowing or recognizing no distinction.

Although Captain Elliott's funeral was to take place on an insupportably hot day, there was not a window of that part of the town through which the procession was to pass that was not crowded, while at the corners of the streets groups were collected, each with some story to relate of him now silent forever. Two young girls returning from a public school, discoursing gravely on the important subject of places in a class, were struck by the loitering multitude; the taller of the two inquired, "For whom is the bell tolling?" and having been informed, turned to her companion with "Oh! Mary, only fancy, Captain Elliott is dead! I am not sorry in the least; but he was a soldier, and somehow I hate to hear of a sol-

dier's death ; we may as well go into one of the shops and wait for the funeral to pass." The young girls went in, and already was heard a distant strain of music.

It is quite true, and scarcely to be wondered at, that, in every age and station, a soldier carries about him a peculiar charm, interesting every one, but more particularly the young ; and they, looking at everything with bright, rainbow colors, invest the soldier too often, in robes of perfection. Many will judge harshly of this partiality, yet why should they ? Is it not natural that we should think of them as connected with all which we hold dear ?—the preservers of our country, the friends of the distressed, the protectors of the innocent ; while who shall doubt a soldier's honor, bravery, or gallantry ? Certainly none from amongst the youthful band, and but few sceptics even can be found in a more advanced age.

Onward moved Captain Elliott's funeral procession. It was a soul-saddening spectacle. As it passed along, all were silent ; but though many wore the emblem of woe, there was not at that grand military display one sincere mourner : no eye was dimmed by a suddenly starting tear. The young officer foremost, with his head drooped, was endeavoring to smother a laugh by pressing his teeth on his under lip ; the tall drummer cast

a careless glance around, and then would strike his hollow burden; and one of the officers who assisted at the ceremonial of bearing the pall, actually smiled and looked back at a pretty girl who was gazing from a window.

“ Shocking! barbarous! ” exclaimed a stranger, looking on, when he had seen the multitude pass. “ Is there none to regret a fellow-mortal; no one to weep over a fellow-soldier’s tomb? I have heard he was even young, and a married man.”

“ True,” answered one at his side; “ but you have not long been living here, or you would know why Captain Elliott has been followed to his last home unwept. She even for whom he forfeited his character, and forgot what he ought to have prized most, a soldier’s vow,—she even fled from him in the hour of sickness,—his wife, the young quakeress who eloped with him from her father’s house scarcely a twelvemonth since, it seems wearied of his love, and the day before he died, disappeared, leaving a letter for her husband to tell ‘she had gone he need not inquire where or with whom.’ Report says Captain Elliott, when informed of it, murmured something about ‘a just punishment,’ then asked ‘whether Captain Hopkins had gone on leave;’ and being answered that he had departed that morning, the sick man smiled bitterly, and died without again asking for his wife. Mrs. Elliott is a pretty,

volatile little woman, his inferior in rank and wealth ; his marriage with her displeased all his family and brother officers, for which reason he exchanged into this regiment. The short time he has been among them, and the cold taciturnity of his manners, may account for the indifference with which they attend his remains. He was indeed one not to be admired ; and yet there is a sad story connected with him, a tale of woman's truth and devotion, and man's wrong and falsehood ; but to you, a stranger, it may prove tiresome."

"Oh, no !" exclaimed his companion ; " I have been much interested by the little you have already told me ; pray continue."

"About two years ago, Captain Elliott first came to this town with the regiment to which he then belonged. He was a young man, perhaps about twenty-eight, not long a captain ; in appearance, plain, disagreeable, almost forbidding, with a person slightly deformed, so as to give his head a crooked, uneasy turn, while a sneer was ever curling about his mouth. He was a mimic and satirical, for which reason his brother officers thought him vastly amusing ; and having an ample fortune, with a generous disposition, it drew towards him many who had no objection to see themselves caricatured for an obliging loan of

money. He attended every place of amusement, and seemed to take no heed of his unsightliness.

"At the regatta of —, on board a yacht belonging to a Mr. Hammond, where a large party of ladies and gentlemen (officers, of course, among the number) had been invited to witness the starting of the different vessels, Captain Elliott first saw Florence Howard. He was in the act of mimicking the nasal twang and peculiar brogue of a gentleman resident at K—, not then present, every one being convulsed with laughter, so perfect was the imitation, with the exception of Florence, who was looking on with a sad expression on her gay, joyous face, standing beside her sister and father. After glancing an eye of pity at the performer of so degrading an exhibition, she turned away, and bent her eyes to the deep water beneath. Captain Elliott had caught the glance, and seen the expression of regret on her countenance; he was interested by one so young having moral courage enough to shun levity while every other was enjoying it. Again and again was he called on to minister to their amusement; but no, though entreaties poured from all, he was inexorable, and the day's entertainment concluded by their voting Captain Elliott uncommonly stupid; but he thought otherwise, for Florence Howard had again looked

towards him, and her eye spoke pleasure and satisfaction.

"At the regatta ball which took place that evening, Captain Elliott again saw the Howards, and was introduced to them by a friend; he asked Florence to dance, and they were talking in a short time, mutually pleased one with the other. Dance succeeded dance; the ball broke up; Captain Elliott and Florence Howard parted, after their first meeting, with regret; and, as he saw her home, he whispered 'he would call on the morrow.'

"He did call from that time almost daily, and he was soon a constant visitor at home, and her general escort abroad. It never occurred to her parents, sister, or friends, that any young girl could regard one so unprepossessing with an eye of affection. Florence was rallied by every one on her conquest of the captain; she smiled, blushed, and of course denied that she cared for him. After some time, Mr. Howard was astonished by a formal proposal of marriage from Captain Elliott for his daughter Florence. The father stormed, raged, and refused him; desiring that he should quit his house, and never again cross his door. Then he went to Florence, and was equally amazed by her confessing that Captain Elliott was so dear to her, she would never wed with any other. Her mother and sister

desired she would consider his disposition and appearance ; that, having a small fortune, she was independent, consequently need not sell herself to one deformed in mind and body. To all, her answer was, ' I love him.' Mr. Howard saw no reason why he should consent to so strange a marriage ; he sternly forbade his daughter thinking of him, and Florence was not allowed to move without a guard of some member of her family. In a short time her health and spirits began to fail ; from a lively, joyous creature, she became sad and absent, often dreaming in the midst of company. At length a physician was consulted, and gave his advice that they should think of the happiness of their child, her mind being in a very unsettled state. The father yielded ; Captain Elliott was sent for, and finally the lovers were engaged ; the young girl smiled again, and was happy. Every evening saw the Howards sauntering along the water-side ; Mrs. Howard and her eldest daughter in front, and Captain Elliott and Florence behind.

" Mrs. Norton has wisely asked, ' Wherein lies the power to charm ? ' Who could avoid doing the same on looking at those affianced ? The ungraceful gait and figure of the officer, with the slight, neat, and elegant girl leaning on his arm, was a contrast so strong you could not fail to observe it.

“ Florence Howard was a very pretty girl. Small, with every feature moulded in perfection; limbs formed in perfect symmetry; fair as snow; with a bright hue on her cheek, and dimpling smiles about her mouth; hair of the sunniest auburn, in long, clustering ringlets; and dark, soft eyes of hazel, which she raised to his continually, with an expression of hope, love, and joy. There was no deception in that gaze; it spoke a gentle girl’s earliest and holiest sentiment.

“The regiment received the rout suddenly, and Captain Elliott went on leave for two months, to visit his family and arrange affairs before his marriage. Florence Howard was now quite happy; Captain Elliott being, she said, the very best correspondent in the world, and his letters breathed the truest devotion. When his leave expired, he joined his regiment, as it was impossible to procure an extension of it; but wrote to Mr. Howard and Florence, saying he would return and sell out. They thought it better to wait, as a few months would pass quickly. At last he obtained the desired permission, and Florence was in delight, for within a week she should see the man who so strangely fascinated her. The preparations were completed for the ceremony, when one morning she raised the newspaper, more from nervousness than curiosity, to read;

but the first word which fixed her attention was her lover's name, and she read with straining eyes of his elopement and marriage with a young quakeress, who had fled with him from her father's shop ; the paper told of his having first seen her while purchasing a pair of gloves ; an acquaintance and attachment followed ; he had obtained leave of absence, and they were married.

" For months Florence Howard was deprived of reason, carried about from place to place by her parents. At length she began slightly to improve, and entreated them to bring her home ; they complied. Florence was silent—even smiled, but so painful was the expression, you could not wish to see it repeated ; and when treading the ball-room, or moving about the gayest promenade, her listless eye and passive manner would tell that a girlish heart beat not beneath the bosom of one so young and fair.

" By a strange chance, the regiment into which Captain Elliott exchanged was ordered here, and he arrived with it, once more, two months since. This place certainly has proved his fate.

" I cannot see how any one could blight or crush so bright a creature as Florence Howard, much less he, whose appearance created naturally feelings of disgust. Whether that he wearied of acting a part, or that sickleness alone drew him to the quakeress, I do not know : his heart must, in truth, have been as deformed as his body.

"I watched him one summer's evening, and wondered how a man and a soldier could act towards an unoffending girl with such unprovoked malignity. Mrs. Elliott and he were returning from a walk, and ascending a hill leading to the barracks, he perceived the Howards passing at some little distance; he stopped, and pointed with his finger to the quivering Florence as she passed close underneath on the road, with a brow crimson from agitation; her face spoke plainly agony of mind. That was not enough; his dark passions were roused, and, turning to his wife, he laughed loud in scorn; the strain of mockery reached Florence's ear, but it was for the last time. Within a week he was stretched on his death-bed, forsaken by every one. It seems as though it was ordained that where he broke his truth, there also should rest his dishonored remains. Yet I know Florence Howard is at this moment weeping tears of agony; forgetful of his deceit, and remembering only his death and her heart's first vow. There, now is the first volley fired over the false and base. I must go, sir, trusting I have not wearied you."

The stranger poured forth his thanks, and they separated.

Again and again was the loud report of musketry heard, doing honor to one who never knew honor; then the quick step came merrily along

the streets, as the military returned to their quarters ; a fitting death-chant and requiem for one so unworthy.

Years have passed away since these events have taken place. Captain Elliott's falsehood, with Florence Howard's truth and confidingness, are forgotten, other and later circumstances occupying the inhabitants of K——. Yet some there are who, like myself, remember "the officer's funeral," and occasionally give a sigh to the memory of blighted hearts, crushed affections, and youth's fervent dreams. Poor Florence ! she has seen her sister married, and lives on, a quiet, passionless woman ; her hopes are pointed to heaven, and her heart lies buried in the grave of the dishonored soldier. No marble monument covers his remains ; no carved headstone tells of him who lies beneath the green sod ; but no record is wanting to remind her who loved : memory will prove a truer one, sharpening its energies by time. Florence Howard needs no hand to lead her to the grassy mound ; the name, age, and time are all engraven within ; and while the spirit lingers in her lone and sorrowful body, she will be true as when, a betrothed bride, she laughed in gladness of heart with the rising sun, and hailed each morning as the harbinger of happiness.

THE PARVENUE.

MRS SHELLEY

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THE PARVENUE.

BY MRS. SHELLEY.

WHY do I write my melancholy story? Is it as a lesson to prevent any other from wishing to rise to rank superior to that in which they are born? No! miserable as I am, others might have been happy, I doubt not, in my position: the chalice has been poisoned for me alone! Am I evil-minded—am I wicked? What have been my errors, that I am now an outcast and a wretch? I will tell my story—let others judge me; my mind is bewildered; I cannot judge myself.

My father was a land steward to a wealthy nobleman. He married young, and had several children. He then lost his wife, and remained fifteen years a widower, when he married again a young girl, the daughter of a clergyman, who died, leaving a numerous offspring in extreme poverty. My maternal grandfather had been a man of sensibility and genius; my mother inherited many of his endowments. She was an earthly angel; all her works were charity, all her thoughts were love.

Within a year after her marriage, she gave birth to twins—I and my sister; soon after she fell into ill health, and from that time was always weakly. She could endure no fatigue, and seldom moved from her chair. I see her now; her white, delicate hands employed in needlework, her soft, love-lighted eyes fixed on me. I was still a child when my father fell into trouble, and we removed from the part of the country where we had hitherto lived, and went to a distant village, where we rented a cottage, with a little land adjoining. We were poor, and all the family assisted each other. My elder half-sisters were strong, industrious, rustic young women, and submitted to a life of labor with great cheerfulness. My father held the plough, my half-brothers worked in the barns; all was toil, yet all seemed enjoyment.

How happy my childhood was! Hand in hand with my dear twin sister, I plucked the spring flowers in the hedges, turned the hay in the summer meadows, shook the apples from the trees in the autumn, and at all seasons gambolled in delicious liberty beneath the free air of heaven; or at my mother's feet, caressed by her, I was taught the sweetest lessons of charity and love. My elder sisters were kind; we were all linked by strong affection. The delicate, fragile existence of my mother gave an interest to our monotony, while

her virtues and her refinement threw a grace over our homely household.

I and my sister did not seem twins, we were so unlike. She was robust, chubby, full of life and spirits ; I, tall, slim, fair, and even pale. I loved to play with her, but soon grew tired, and then I crept to my mother's side, and she sang me to sleep, and nursed me in her bosom, and looked on me with her own angelic smile. She took pains to instruct me, not in accomplishments, but in all real knowledge. She unfolded to me the wonders of the visible creation, and to each tale of bird and beast, of fiery mountain or vast river, was appended some moral, derived from her warm heart and ardent imagination. Above all, she impressed upon me the precepts of the gospel, charity to every fellow-creature, the brotherhood of mankind, the rights that every sentient creature possesses to our services alone. I was her almoner ; for, poor as she was, she was the benefactress of those who were poorer. Being delicate, I helped her in her task of needle-work, while my sister aided the rest in their household or rustic labors.

When I was seventeen, a miserable accident happened. A hayrick caught fire ; it communicated to our outhouses, and at last to the cottage. We were roused from our beds at midnight, and escaped barely with our lives. My father bore out

my mother in his arms, and then tried to save a portion of his property. The roof of the cottage fell in on him. He was dug out after an hour, scorched, maimed, crippled for life.

We were all saved, but by a miracle only was I preserved. I and my sister were awoke by cries of fire. The cottage was already enveloped in flames. Susan, with her accustomed intrepidity, rushed through the flames, and escaped; I thought only of my mother, and hurried to her room. The fire raged around me; it encircled—hemmed me in. I believed that I must die, when suddenly I felt myself seized upon and borne away. I looked on my preserver—it was Lord Reginald Desborough.

For many Sundays past, when at church, I knew that Lord Reginald's eyes were fixed on me. He had met me and Susan in our walks; he had called at our cottage. There was fascination in his eye, in his soft voice and earnest gaze, and my heart throbbed with gladness as I thought that he surely loved me. To have been saved by him was to make the boon of life doubly precious.

There is to me much obscurity in this part of my story. Lord Reginald loved me, it is true; why he loved me, so far as to forget pride of rank and ambition for my sake, he who afterwards showed no tendency to disregard the prejudices and

habits of rank and wealth, I cannot tell ; it seems strange. He had loved me before, but from the hour that he saved my life, love grew into an overpowering passion. He offered us a lodge on his estate to take refuge in ; and while there, he sent us presents of game, and still more kindly, fruits and flowers to my mother, and came himself, especially when all were out except my mother and myself, and sat by us and conversed. Soon I learned to expect the soft, asking look of his eyes, and almost dared answer it. My mother once perceived these glances, and took an opportunity to appeal to Lord Reginald's good feelings, not to make me miserable for life by implanting an attachment that could only be productive of unhappiness. His answer was to ask me in marriage.

I need not say that my mother gratefully consented—that my father, confined to his bed since the fire, thanked God with rapture—that my sisters were transported by delight : I was the least surprised then, though the most happy. Now, I wonder much, what could he see in me ? So many girls of rank and fortune were prettier. I was an untaught, low-born, portionless girl. It was very strange.

Then I only thought of the happiness of marrying him, of being loved, of passing my life with him. My wedding-day was fixed. Lord Regi-

nald had neither father nor mother to interfere with his arrangements. He told no relation ; he became one of our family during the interval. He saw no deficiencies in our mode of life—in my dress ; he was satisfied with all ; he was tender, assiduous, and kind, even to my elder sisters ; he seemed to adore my mother, and became a brother to my sister Susan. She was in love, and asked him to intercede to gain her parents' consent for her choice. He did so ; and though before, Lawrence Cooper, the carpenter of the place, had been disdained, supported by him, he was accepted. Lawrence Cooper was young, well-looking, well disposed, and fondly attached to Susan.

My wedding-day came. My mother kissed me fondly, my father blessed me with pride and joy, my sisters stood round, radiant with delight. There was but one drawback to the universal happiness—that immediately on my marriage, I was to go abroad.

From the church door I stepped into the carriage. Having once and again been folded in my dear mother's embrace, the wheels were in motion, and we were away. I looked out from the window ; there was the dear group ; my old father, white-headed and aged, in his large chair, my mother, smiling through her tears, with folded hands, and upraised looks of gratitude, antici-

pating long years of happiness for her grateful Fanny; Susan and Lawrence standing side by side, unenvious of my greatness, happy in themselves; my sisters conning over with pride and joy the presents made to them, and the prosperity that flowed in from my husband's generosity. All looked happy, and it seemed as if I were the cause of all this happiness. We had been indeed saved from dreadful evils; ruin had ensued from the fire, and we had been sunk in adversity through that very event from which our good fortune took its rise. I felt proud and glad. I loved them all. I thought, I make them happy—they are prosperous through me! And my heart warmed with gratitude towards my husband at the idea.

We spent two years abroad. It was rather lonely for me, who had always been surrounded, as it were, by a populous world of my own, to find myself cast upon foreigners and strangers; the habits of the different sexes in the higher ranks so separate them from each other, that after a few months, I spent much of my time in solitude. I did not repine; I had been brought up to look upon the hard visage of life, if not unflinchingly, at least with resignation. I did not expect perfect happiness. Marriages in humble life are attended with as much care. I had none of this; my husband loved me; and though

I often longed to see the dear familiar faces that thronged my childhood's home, and above all I pined for my mother's caresses and her wise maternal lessons, yet for a time I was content to think of them, and hope for a reunion, and to acquiesce in the present separation.

Still many things pained me : I had, poor myself, been brought up among the poor, and nothing, since I can remember forming an idea, so much astonished and jarred with my feelings, as the thought of how the rich could spend so much on themselves, while any one of their fellow-creatures was in destitution. I had none of the patrician charity, (though such is praiseworthy,) which consists in distributing thin soup and coarse flannel petticoats — a sort of instinct or sentiment of justice, the offspring of my lowly paternal hearth, and my mother's enlightened piety, was deeply implanted in my mind, that all had as good a right to the comforts of life as myself, or even as my husband. My charities, they were called — they seemed to me the payment of my debts to my fellow-creatures — were abundant. Lord Reginald peremptorily checked them ; but as I had a large allowance for my own expenses, I denied myself a thousand luxuries to which it appeared to me I had no right, for the sake of feeding the hungry. Nor was it only that charity impelled me, but that I could not acquire a

taste for spending money on myself—I disliked the apparatus of wealth. My husband called my ideas sordid, and reproved me severely, when, instead of outshining all competitors at a *fête*, I appeared dowdily dressed, and declared warmly that I could not, I would not, spend twenty guineas on a gown, while I could dress so many sad faces in smiles, and bring so much joy to so many drooping hearts, by the same sum.

Was I right? I firmly believe that there is not one among the rich who will not affirm that I did wrong; that to please my husband and do honor to his rank, was my first duty. Yet, shall I confess it? even now, rendered miserable by this fault—I cannot give it that name—I can call it a misfortune—it is such to be consumed at the stake, a martyr for one's faith. Do not think me presumptuous in this simile; for many years I have wasted at the slow fire of knowing that I lost my husband's affections because I performed what I believed to be a duty.

But I am not come to that yet. It was not till my return to England that the full disaster crushed me. We had often been applied to for money by my family, and Lord Reginald had acceded to nearly all their requests. When we reached London, after two years' absence, my first wish was to see my dear mother. She was at Margate for her health. It was agreed that I

should go there alone, and pay a short visit. Before I went, Lord Reginald told me what I did not know before, that my family had often made exorbitant demands on him, with which he was resolved not to comply. He told me he had no wish to raise my relatives from their station in society ; and that, indeed, there were only two among them whom he conceived had any claims upon me—my mother and my twin sister : that the former was incapable of any improper request, and the latter, by marrying Cooper, had fixed her own position, and could in no way be raised from the rank of her chosen husband. I agreed to much that he said. I replied that he well knew that my own taste led me to consider mediocrity the best and happiest situation ; that I had no wish, and would never consent, to supply any extravagant demands on the part of persons, however dear to me, whose circumstances he had rendered easy.

Satisfied with my reply, we parted most affectionately, and I went on my way to Margate with a light and glad heart ; and the cordial reception I received from my whole family collected together to receive me, was calculated to add to my satisfaction. The only drawback to my content was my mother's state ; she was wasted to a shadow. They all talked and laughed around her, but it was evident to me that she had not long to live.

There was no room for me in the small furnished house in which they were all crowded, so I remained at the hotel. Early in the morning, before I was up, my father visited me. He begged me to intercede with my husband ; that, on the strength of his support, he had embarked in a speculation which required a large capital ; that many families would be ruined, and himself dishonored, if a few hundreds were not advanced. I promised to do what I could, resolving to ask my mother's advice, and make her my guide. My father kissed me with an effusion of gratitude, and left me.

I cannot enter into the whole of these sad details ; all my half-brothers and sisters had married, and trusted to their success in life to Lord Reginald's assistance. Each evidently thought that they asked little in not demanding an equal share of my luxuries and fortune ; but they were all in difficulty — all needed large assistance — all depended on me.

Lastly, my own sister Susan appealed to me ; but hers was the most moderate request of all — she only wished for twenty pounds. I gave it her at once from my own purse.

As soon as I saw my mother I explained to her my difficulties. She told me that she expected this, and that it broke her heart : I must summon courage, and resist these demands. That my

father's imprudence had ruined him, and that he must encounter the evil he had brought on himself; that my numerous relatives were absolutely mad with the notion of what I ought to do for them. I listened with grief—I saw the torments in store for me—I felt my own weakness, and knew that I could not meet the rapacity of those about me with any courage or firmness. That same night my mother fell into convulsions; her life was saved with difficulty. From Susan I learned the cause of her attack. She had had a violent altercation with my father: she insisted that I should not be appealed to; while he reproached her for rendering me undutiful, and bringing ruin and disgrace on his grey hairs. When I saw my pale mother trembling, fainting, dying—when I was again and again assured that she must be my father's victim unless I yielded, what wonder that, in the agony of my distress, I wrote to my husband to implore his assistance.

O ! what thick clouds now obscured my destiny ! how do I remember, with a sort of thrilling horror, the boundless sea, white cliffs, and wide sands of Margate. The summer day that had welcomed my arrival changed to bleak wintry weather during this interval—while I waited with anguish for my husband's answer. Well do I remember the evening on which it came : the

waves of the sea showed their white crests, no vessel ventured to meet the gale with any canvass except a topsail, the sky was bared clear by the wind, the sun was going down fiery red. I looked upon the troubled waters — I longed to be borne away upon them, away from care and misery. At this moment a servant followed me to the sands with my husband's answer ; it contained a refusal. I dared not communicate it. The menaces of bankruptcy ; the knowledge that he had instilled false hopes into so many ; the fears of disgrace rendered my father, always rough, absolutely ferocious. Life flickered in my dear mother's frame ; it seemed on the point of expiring when she heard my father's step ; if he came in with a smooth brow, her pale lips wreathed into her own sweet smile, and a delicate pink tinged her fallen cheeks ; if he scowled, and his voice was high, every limb shivered, she turned her face to her pillow, while convulsive tears shook her frame, and threatened instant dissolution. My father sought me alone one day, as I was walking in melancholy guise upon the sands ; he swore that he would not survive his disgrace ; "And do you think, Fanny," he added, "that your mother will survive the knowledge of my miserable end ?" I saw the resolution of despair in his face as he spoke. I asked the sum needed — the time when it must be

given. A thousand pounds in two days was all that was asked. I set off to London to implore my husband to give this sum.

No ! no ! I cannot, step by step, record my wretchedness ; the money was given—I extorted it from Lord Reginald, though I saw his very heart closed on me as he wrote the cheque. Worse had happened since I had left him. Susan had used the twenty pounds I gave her to reach town, to throw herself at my husband's feet, and implore his compassion. Rendered absolutely insane by the idea of having a lord for a brother-in-law, Cooper had launched into a system of extravagance, incredible as it was wicked. He was many thousand pounds in debt, and when at last Lord Reginald wrote to refuse all further supply, the miserable man committed forgery. Two hundred pounds prevented exposure, and preserved him from an ignominious end. Five hundred more were advanced to send him and his wife to America, to settle there out of the way of temptation. I parted from my dear sister ; I loved her fondly ; she had no part in her husband's guilt, yet she was still attached to him, and her child bound them together ; they went into solitary, miserable exile. "Ah ! had we remained in virtuous poverty," cried my broken-hearted sister, "I had not been forced to leave my dying mother."

The thousand pounds given to my father was but a drop of water in the ocean. Again I was appealed to ; again I felt the slender thread of my mother's life depended on my getting a supply. Again, trembling and miserable, I implored the charity of my husband.

"I am content," he said, "to do what you ask, to do more than you ask ; but remember the price you pay—either give up your parents and your family, whose rapacity and crimes deserve no mercy, or we part forever. You shall have a proper allowance ; you can maintain all your family on it if you please ; but their names must never be mentioned to me again. Choose between us, Fanny—you never see them more, or we part forever."

Did I do right ?—I cannot tell—misery is the result—misery, frightful, endless, unredeemed. My mother was dearer to me than all the world — my heart revolted from my husband's selfishness. I did not reply ; I rushed to my room, and that night, in a sort of delirium of grief and horror, at my being asked never again to see my mother, I set out for Margate — such was my reply to my husband.

Three years have passed since then ; for these three I preserved my mother, and during all this time I was grateful to Heaven for being permitted to do my duty by her, and though I

wept over the alienation of my cruel husband, I did not repent. But she, my angelic support, is no more. My father survived my mother but two months; remorse for all he had done and made me suffer, cut short his life. His family by his first wife are gathered round me; they importune, they rob, they destroy me. Last week I wrote to Lord Reginald. I communicated the death of my parents; I represented that my position was altered; that my duties did not now clash; and if he still cared for his unhappy wife, all might be well. Yesterday his answer came. It was too late, he said; I had myself torn asunder the ties that united us; they never could be knit together again.

By the same post came a letter from Susan. She is happy. Cooper, profiting by the frightful lesson he incurred, awakened to a manly sense of the duties of life, is thoroughly reformed. He is industrious, prosperous, and respectable. Susan asks me to join her. I am resolved to go. O! my native village, and recollections of my youth, to which I sacrificed so much, where are ye now? — tainted by pestilence, envenomed by serpents' stings, I long to close my eyes on every scene I have ever viewed. Let me seek a strange land, a land where a grave will soon be opened for me. I feel that I cannot live long — I desire to die. I am told that Lord Reginald loves another

— a highborn girl ; that he openly curses our union as the obstacle to his happiness. The memory of this will poison the oblivion I go to seek in a distant land. He will be free. Soon will the hand he once so fondly took in his and made his own, which, now flung away, trembles with misery as it traces these lines, moulder in its last decay.

THE SACRIFICE.

A STORY OF THE LAST WHITE ROSE.

“RED roses are the fashion now-a-days, fair lady,” was the exclamation of a knightly-looking personage, as, forcing himself without much trouble through a break in the hedge, he stood by the side of the Lady Somerton: “Red roses are the fashion, yet I perceive you gather only the white ones; now if you will accept my aid in the assortment of your posy, I shall enliven it with the blushing flower. See, too, how much hardier these are than those pale, sickly buds.”

Lady Somerton was startled by the first words which fell upon her ear, and the pale roses trembled in her grasp; but ere Sir Pierre Brandon’s speech was concluded, she recovered, by an effort of the will, at least the semblance of composure. She could not but return the courteous greeting of Sir Pierre, for though unknown to him by any formal introduction, she had received, three days previously, a signal service at his hands. Whether in search of white roses or wild flowers, we cannot tell, but she had been tempted on that occasion to wander beyond the precincts of the park, and, unconscious till too late that the

country was being scoured by the king's troops, had been rudely accosted by a party of soldiers. Utterly ignorant *at that time* of the meaning of their questions, she was yet painfully alarmed by their rude and imperious behavior; when Sir Pierre, riding up, dispersed them by a word, and then, with the chivalry of a soldier and a gentleman, escorted Edith and her old attendant to the gates of Somerton Park. To her deliverer she therefore felt truly grateful, and though she could have wished that he had caught her in some other act than that of gathering white roses, she accepted his offer in as playful a manner as she could command, and added the Lancastrian bouquet with which he supplied her to those Yorkist buds she had already gathered.

"Now have you a most loyal offering," exclaimed Sir Pierre, striving to meet with his own searching glance the soft eyes of Edith Somerton,—"meet even for the wise Tudor himself, since you retain just enough fair blossoms—poor things that they are—to remind him of the wife he has raised to share his throne."

She did not look up, though she felt her cheek grow pallid for a moment, and then the rebel blood return with added vigor to dye it crimson. How many a warm rejoinder hovered on her lip, which prudence warned her to restrain! But she only murmured,

“Alas! that a sweet flower should ever have been chosen as the type of civil discord! Flowers, fit emblems only of peace and joy;—flowers, a remnant of paradise;—flowers, which in their fragrant breaths, and beauteous forms, bear a message from heaven, that earth was not made only for sin and woe. Flowers! what have ye to do with violence and death, with orphans' tears, and widows' wailing?”

“To deck the conqueror's brow, fair lady.”

“Unmeet—unmeet.”

By this time they had approached the house, and though for many reasons Edith little desired to introduce a stranger guest, and that guest a Lancastrian knight, she felt that to offer a marked slight to Sir Pierre would be the most dangerous policy she could pursue. Yet her voice trembled as she said, “Sir Hugh Somerton desires to thank you for the service you rendered his wife; and though at this moment he is not at home, and I therefore will not ask you to enter, he would blame me, if I did not urge you to favor him with a visit ere you quit our neighborhood.”

“Then, lady, I must pay it before sunset; so, by your leave, I will wait on him in an hour.”

Lady Somerton hurried to her chamber, where, casting one rapid glance around, to be certain that she was alone, she gave vent to her feelings

in a flood of tears. But this was no hour for the indulgence of such feminine weakness; and soon removing all outward signs of her emotion, she separated the two bouquets, although terrified in the midst of the task by the sound of a bell which proclaimed the quick flight of time. Then descending from her chamber, she entered her husband's favorite room, in which an air of luxury and refinement prevailed, unusual at that period. But Sir Hugh's father had been a merchant-knight in the days of the merchant-monarch Edward the Fourth, and this circumstance might account for the costly carpet, and sumptuous hangings, which decorated the apartment. Till the lady entered it was untenanted, which quickly perceiving, she approached a seemingly ponderous cabinet of ebony; scarcely, however, had she touched a spring, when, revolving on hinges, it swung forward by its own weight, revealing a secret door in the wall. The next moment Edith stood within a rude and narrow chamber, but as she advanced towards the occupant of this retreat, she would have kneeled to offer a subject's homage, had he not caught her hands and prevented the obeisance. She was in the presence of one, whom history scarcely knows how to designate. For, as each cycle passes by, rescuing stern truths from the disguises heaped upon them by ignorance, or power, or prejudice,

the more inclined are we to recognize RICHARD PLANTAGENET in him who has so long been regarded as the impostor, PERKIN WARBECK!

“I come, your highness,” said Lady Somerton, “at my husband’s bidding, to ask if there be any service I can render in his absence to break the tedium of the day. He is himself riding towards Exeter, to put the despatch intended for the Lady Katherine into the hands of the trusty serving man who is deputed as the messenger. And, my liege, an hour after sunset—”

“A horse will be ready to convey me to the sole refuge my hard destiny yields me.”

“Tis but for a brief interval your faithful friends advise their prince to secure his safety in the Holy Sanctuary of Beaulieu. Only while they gather his scattered troops to rally round his banner.”

“While I must rest in idleness! By Heaven! my heart and mind will rot away the body, even as the sword’s rust eats into the scabbard!”

“My king!”

“Forgive me, lady. Rather let us speak of the time—for surely it will come—when a grateful monarch shall prove his obligations to his tried friends.”

Not till that moment did Edith perceive that in her agitation she had provided herself with the red roses instead of the fair Yorkist blossoms,

which she had intended to present to her guest !
He divined the cause of her emotion, for as tears again flowed, she exclaimed, " Oh ! how evil an omen ! "

" By defying, I will overrule the omen. Give them me, lady ; and though they wither on my heart, I will keep them for my coronation — it will be useful in prosperity to be reminded of an hour like this."

" Rather would I sacrifice the best blood of my house ! " exclaimed Lady Somerton, trampling the flowers beneath her feet.

" Hush ! " said her guest ; " tempt not fate by the offer of a sacrifice. Unhappy Richard ! " and he buried his face in his hands.

Edith endeavored to soothe and comfort her guest, and though anxious to be the first to encounter Sir Hugh on his return, lingered in cheering conversation for another half-hour : and when she quitted the chamber, or closet, as it might more properly be called, she did so by a different outlet to that by which she had entered. The secret recess, alas ! so often necessary in the troublous times of which we write, communicated also with the chapel, where beneath their sculptured tombs reposed many of Sir Hugh's ancestors. The walls were hung with martial trophies, and implements of war, as even to this day we find — so strong is old custom — religious

fanés, polluted by mementos of strife and blood-shed. Here, to her astonishment, she found two stranger monks in company with Ralph Wiloughby, the busy idler—the wild madcap, but faithful servant—the jester of the family. He was in the entire confidence of his master, as indeed his presence there testified, for none other could have obtained access to the chapel. Hurriedly he related that the holy men belonged to the fraternity of Beaulieu; that they had come hither provided with a cowl and gown in which to disguise the fugitive, the more safely to conduct him to their sanctuary.

“Is Sir Hugh returned?” exclaimed Lady Somerton, with anxiety; “knows he of your plans?”

“Lady, we come at his suggestion,” replied the elder of the two, “ostensibly to perform mass for the soul of his brother; the anniversary of whose death this chances to be, Heaven forgive the deception!” and the monk crossed himself devoutly as he added, “we will perform seven masses as an atonement.”

“Will your masses,” chimed in Ralph, the jester, who could be earnest enough when occasion called,—“will your masses, holy fathers, spirit away the soul fiend who I think now holds Sir Hugh prisoner in the east-chamber, in the

—

shape of that Tudor knight, Sir Pierre Brandon?"

Lady Somerton started and turned pale with fear — for the east-chamber was that from which she had entered the fugitive's retreat; and but too truly did she dread that Sir Pierre was even now on some secret service of the king to arrest his steps. Much was there in their converse that morning which led to this belief, and quickly did she communicate her fears to the party in the chapel. For a few moments there was silence, which Ralph was the first to break.

"It is not possible," said he, "to warn Sir Hugh of our fears or our plans; but if you will take the fool's advice, it is this. Quickly let him don the garments you have brought, and thus our prince may escape at once, instead of waiting till sunset, the time proposed. I will take his place, and if they try the cabinet door, will hold out as stoutly as if the right man were there, and thus give time for him to escape."

The plan seemed so judicious and feasible, that it was instantly agreed on, and quickly put into execution; and the half-hour thus gained, it might be, protracted for a few months the liberty of *him* whom we yet scarcely know how to name, or reserved his life for a sadder ending than the sword's point would have proved. But

not without a sacrifice could such a respite be purchased !

Prophetic were the fears of Lady Somerton. The faithful Ralph immured himself in the secret chamber, and she remained in trembling prayer within the chapel. The reverend fathers joined in her devotions, for so far did they adhere to their original plan, that they determined on joining the hapless Perkin at a spot where they had appointed to meet after sunset. But for a while we must follow Sir Hugh to the east-chamber.

On his return home he had hastened to that favorite apartment, and his hand was actually on the spring which would have opened the way to the secret retreat, when Sir Pierre Brandon was announced. Ostensibly he came to pay a visit of civility, but the mask was quickly thrown off, when, raising a whistle to his lips, one shrill note filled the room with soldiers, who, in the king's name, had orders to search the mansion for the traitor ! Ere, however, a sword was drawn, he offered a free pardon to Sir Hugh, for all past connivance, on condition that he gave up the offender. With the chivalry of his age and character, he would probably have refused under any circumstances to surrender the defenceless to the strong arm of constituted authority ; how then could he betray him, whom he devoutly considered his lawful sovereign ? Calling loudly

on the few retainers who were within hearing, he placed his back, as if by accident, against the ebony cabinet, determined to defend that entrance to the last. Soon was that gorgeous chamber the scene of death and bloodshed, for soldiers and retainers both fell in the strife. It was clear, however, that Sir Pierre had obtained some clue to the secret entrance, for to the cabinet were the soldiers' efforts directed, and but a moment before it was forced, did Sir Hugh receive his mortal wound !

The whistle — the cry — the clash of swords — had aroused the prayerful trio in the chapel from their devotions ; and now that she felt the realization of her fear, all the woman was awokened in her bosom, and though loyalty and faith towards the wanderer slumbered not for an instant, Lady Somerton began to understand the price which might be paid for them. The shortest way to the east-chamber was through the secret closet ; but, alas ! there was a strong reason that the entrance by the cabinet should be guarded to the last moment. Swift, therefore, as the thought which dictated her action, she fled from the chapel and crossed a court-yard which separated it from the main building. There were none to impede her, and no one did she meet but a frightened waiting-woman. Even as she rushed into the chamber, still the scene

of mortal contention, the rude soldiers instinctively made way for the wife to pass,— and almost at the moment that Sir Hugh received his death-wound, and the secret door yielded, his beloved Edith sank upon his bosom, and, unconscious of his state, whispered, in accents only intelligible to him, the flight of Perkin.

When the door opened, honest Ralph, with arms a-kimbo, presented himself to the intruders; but the jest and the jeer, which, as a privileged person, hovered on his lips, were driven back by the sight he beheld. And while the soldiers, no longer impeded, ransacked the secret passages of the house, Ralph, the jester, and two or three of the faithful servants who had remained unharmed through the conflict, conveyed their master, at his urgent request, through the chamber so lately tenanted by "The White Rose" (as his followers proudly called him,) to the old chapel we have mentioned already. It was the age of romance in love, and superstition in religion, and even at that moment, when the brave Sir Hugh felt assured that his life-blood was ebbing away, he asked that his soul might quit its prison of clay in a consecrated place, and the parting gaze of his beloved Edith might meet his own on the spot where their marriage vows were solemnized. Scarcely an hour did he survive, but the reverend fathers who had come at

his bidding for so different a purpose, had time to offer him the last consolations of religion ; and on his father's tomb, supported by the arm of the faithful Ralph, and solaced — as love can solace, even such an hour — by the presence of Edith — the sacrifice to loyalty was completed !

The remainder of Perkin Warbeck's career, and his ignominious fate at last, belong to history ; and this is not the place to moot his pretensions to be called " The White Rose of York." Certain it is that he had partisans among the regal — nay, the Plantagenets themselves — and among the noble, the wealthy, and the wise. They must have had better opportunities of judging of his claims than can be found by the reflected light of the records which remain ; and allowing for the fallibility of human judgment, and yet more largely for the party interests of the period, it is not difficult to understand the sincere belief in his identity, which his followers undoubtedly entertained. And, alas ! Plantagenet or Fleming, many were the *sacrifices* to the last banner blazoned with the White Rose !

THE SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

WEAVER, ARNHELDT

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1849; American Periodicals

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THE SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

BY ARNHELDT WEAVER.

It was a wild night. The wind went grumbling through wide streets, and played the very maniac in courts and alleys— shrieking— howling— shaking the insecure doors of the crazy tenements—in many instances bursting them open, and taking forcible possession of the houses, which it did not quit till it had penetrated every hole and corner,— ransacked every recess,— turned all movable articles topsy-turvy, and filled the wretched apartments with suffocating, blinding smoke, sending children into paroxysms of coughing and squalling, and making mothers as frantic as itself. This did the wind.

But the snow led the van that night. People could have borne with the wind, but the snow was too much for them. It was a fine sight to witness in its driving, headlong career,— in its infuriate, headstrong rage; but God help the wretch who, on such a night, can look on nothing else. The streets, of course, were deserted by everybody but the houseless and the police.

The clock of St. Martin's church struck the three-quarters past eleven, as a man of middle

age — if years be reckoned, but judging from his appearance, a man turned of sixty — issued suddenly from a dark archway in the Strand, one of those obscure passages that lead down to the river, and followed closely in the steps of one of his own sex, who had just passed hurriedly in the direction of Charing Cross. The cabs were withdrawn from most of the stands, the weather being too severe even for a cabman's defiance, and along the streets which the person thus followed had traversed not a vehicle had appeared within hail, save a solitary omnibus which was going in an opposite direction. Thus he was compelled to walk, or was more properly driven along by the wind.

The man who issued from the low-browed archway had fought with the weather from his youth upward, and exposure to the elements in this our English climate makes a man prematurely old. He had been hungry too, lean and hungry, from his boyish days ; and constant hunger is a great promoter of senile appearance. For many previous years he had slept in metropolitan and suburban churchyards, — an animate corpse, uncoffined amongst tombs. He stole when he could ; but not being an expert thief, he ate but seldom, and the wolf gnawed his vitals at all hours and upon all days.

He followed the individual we have alluded to,

and overtook him in Parliament street. For some minutes they walked abreast, the almost nude beside the well-clad and warmly-wrapped man. Suddenly the former, falling two steps backward, aimed a savage blow, and a senseless body was stretched upon the snow that covered the pavement to the depth of several inches. The hungry man, having scanned the street with an eye quick to detect the advance of a passenger, knelt over the body and commenced to rifle it. He quickly possessed himself of a purse tolerably well-filled, a gold watch and a pocket-book; then secreting his booty as well as he was able about his person, he fled: almost equalling the wind in his speed. Some five or six minutes afterwards, the plundered man, recovering himself, got up and started off towards Westminster, crying "Thieves! thieves!" But the thief had gone in a contrary direction. Encountering only a policeman emerging from a tavern, and smelling powerfully of rum, who proposed to run and inquire at the station-house, and hearing no footsteps ahead, he gave up the supposed chase, and resigned himself to bear his loss.

The thief, once secure from pursuit, took his way more leisurely towards St. Giles', where he procured a supper and a bed, and awaited the daylight that he might, unobserved, examine the

pocket-book more particularly, and dispose of the watch to a cunning Jew living in Houndsditch.

The wind had subsided, and the snow had ceased to fall, before the breaking of the dawn. The man early quitted the den where human creatures slept by dozens, of both sexes, in one room, and hurried towards the Jew's residence. But turning into an unoccupied corner on his route, he paused to examine the pocket-book. It contained nothing that was valuable, only a few papers, and a letter or two, that revealed the owner's name and address. The man read, for he *could* read, the superscription of these letters, when something that was extraordinary happened. The reader started, as though touched by a torpedo. He read and read again. A cold perspiration burst from every pore of his frame; tears stood in his eyes. He turned with faltering steps, and set out to find the abode indicated by the letters.

The felon soon reached the house of the man he had stunned and plundered on the preceding night. It was in —— street, Westminster. He passed and repassed. The sun was shining in the street; the fallen snow was thawing fast; the air was fresh and mild; the sky was unclouded and very blue. The upper blinds of the house were drawn; it was large and roomy, the abode of a prosperous, world-favored man. The

outcast went towards the park hastily, with clenched hands and convulsed limbs. About to enter the enclosure, a beadle repelled him, telling him in surly tones to begone about his business. A well-dressed man arriving at that moment, the beadle made way for *him*.

A second time he reached the house. On this occasion he summoned courage and knocked. The door was opened by a liveried footman, rubicund, and greasy; a smirking, cringing fellow, when accosted by a wearer of good apparel, but of freezing, repulsive front, when the owner of an indifferent garb addressed him. He had too faithfully aped the manners of the different masters he had served to be even civil to the likeness of God when garmented in rags. The outcast fell back from the door, repelled by the haughty, insolent air of the menial who confronted him. He *could not* speak the words he longed to speak to such a man; something he stammered out, but the lackey's "What d'ye want *here*? You have mistaken the house, have n't ye?" accompanied by a wanton gesture of contempt, sent the applicant back to the street.

But old associations had been that morning awakened, and they were not thus roughly to be trampled out. The man, wandering he cared not whither, passed the Abbey. He saw the door at Poet's Corner open. He remembered to

have been once — many years ago it was — in the interior, and a wish to see again those speaking sights which are there treasured up in chiselled stone, took possession of him. He approached the door ; a verger stood on the threshold and drove him away — away from God's temple.

Driven from the enclosure of the park, — driven from the temple, — the poor outcast directed his steps towards Westminster Bridge ; there, at least, he might stay, thence he would not be driven, and there he could see the sun-rays descend into the river. But being weary, for he had had only one night's unbroken rest in the last ninety-six hours, he sat down upon a door-step. He had not remained there many minutes before a policeman came up to him. "What do you do here ?" demanded the myrmidon of the law.

"I am tired out — I am only resting," replied the outcast.

"I shall take you to the station-house then, and you 'll go up before a magistrate."

"What for ?"

"FOR EXCITING CHARITY."

And the policeman was as good as his word. Behold them before the officiating magistrate. "Do you mean to say," cried that functionary,

"that you have arrested this man for merely sitting on a door-step?"

"He was exciting charity, your wusship."

"How do you know that? Did you see him beg?"

"No, your wusship. But I think he sat there to excite compassion."

"You think! Did you watch him?"

"Yes, your wusship."

"Did he accost any one?"

"I can't say as he did, your wusship."

"Then he is discharged. You have exceeded your duty, policeman. Be more careful in future."

In his unfortunate hurry to get out of the dock the outcast dropped the pocket-book which he had concealed about him, and in his attempt to catch it before it reached the ground the watch appeared in sight. The policeman pounced upon him.

"A pocket-book and a gold watch, your wusship, he's got about him. I knew he was a queer character. I never exceeds my duty, saving your wusship's presence."

"Hold your tongue, policeman. Place the man in the dock again. Now, prisoner, I suspect you of stealing those articles. Where did you get them?"

The outcast replied not. The policeman seemed struck by a luminous idea.

"A gentleman was knocked down and robbed in Parliament street, last night, your wusship," he said deferentially. "Information was laid at the station by one of our men who was on duty."

"Hand me the pocket-book and watch," said the magistrate. On receiving them, he examined the former, and read the owner's address. In a few minutes the policeman was on his way to — street, Westminster. Other cases were called and examined. About half an hour had elapsed, when the officer of the law returned, accompanied by the plundered man. How curious an employment were it to analyze the emotions of the thief, as he devoured every lineament in the features of this individual! Expectation vividly on the rack before he entered, and then, —

Not a feature the same. The youth's visage had disappeared. The sharp set lines indicating the countenance of the man, showed too plainly how deep the world had driven its ploughshare into the heart that, as a boy's, was noble. Each succeeding furrow, too, deeper than the last.

The magistrate exhibited the watch and pocket-book, and said, —

"Is this your property, sir?"

"It is," replied the other. "I was knocked down and robbed of it last night."

"Do you suppose you could recognize the party who attacked you?"

The plundered man looked round and singled out the thief immediately.

"There he is. He trembles, you see, sir."

The examination proceeded — the robbery of the purse was stated, and the purse itself, with only a trifle of its contents abstracted, was delivered up by the thief. In a brief space of time his committal to Newgate was made out. But what is this scene which takes place?

The thief, forcing his passage from the dock, as his prosecutor was about to quit the office, threw himself at his feet, and clung to his legs, impeding his further progress.

"Arthur Willis!" he cried, "do you not know me, then? Has my name really escaped your recollection? Do you forget your old playmate? Look at me — look at me. I am he — ! We were great friends, you know, in our boyhood. We had everything we possessed in common. You remember that, do you not?"

Thus far he had run on weeping, abject, clutching the other's apparel, when the man so addressed, speaking to the magistrate, said,

"Will you assist me, sir?"

“ Remove him, policeman,” was the mandate delivered.

“ What, you do not — will not recollect me, then ? ”

“ Remove him, policeman.

But the outcast saved them all further trouble. He rose from the ground. The prosecutor made his exit from the office. From that time the prisoner assumed a sullen aspect, and, avoiding his fellows in Newgate, remained apart, sun-dered from his last hope, his last affection.

He was sentenced to seven years' transportation ; but underwent his punishment at the hulks, instead of leaving the country. Not altogether destitute was he dismissed at the expiration of that long period. The chaplain,—a man of God in a stricter and better sense than a mere professional one,—struck by his history and praiseworthy behavior, made him a present of five pounds. Meanwhile, his prosecutor had been ruined by the failure of a speculation in which he had extensively embarked, had removed from house to house, always going downward in the scale of respectability as applied to residences, and was now occupying a small apart-ment in an obscure street in Southwark.

Chance led the man released from the hulks into this street, led him to take an apartment therein with the intention of carrying on the

business of shoemaking, an employment he had been taught on board his marine prison. One day, as he sat in his little shop, he saw a man issue from the opposite dwelling, and limp with faltering steps along the uneven pavement. Could it be? Had possibility no limits?

The cordwainer hammered at his shoes all that day, and late into the night, and the next day, and the next the same, stringing old songs to one another so rapidly, that he did not cease to croon and sing the whole time. But the fourth day?

He did not work that morning. He did not sing. It was beautiful summer weather. A man going by his door offered flowers for sale. A linnet at the adjoining house went off into an intoxicating career of song. He bought some flowers. He stepped into the street to look at the linnet. He felt his eyes moisten, and experienced a choking sensation at the throat. Returning to his apartment, and making himself as tidy as he could, he crossed the road, and knocked at the door opposite to his own.

“ You have a person named Willis living here ? ” he said to the woman who appeared.

“ Yes, what d’ye want with him ? ”

“ I wish to see him.”

“ He’s ill, but you can go up stairs ; you can’t miss the room.”

And in another minute, the late felon was in

the presence of his late prosecutor, — the dear companion and cherished friend of his boyhood. Willis was dying ; it required no experienced eye to see that.

“ Ah ! you know me, Arthur Willis. I am Alfred Pole ; look on me ; see me now, as in my boyhood, nothing changed — but your dear friend still ; true to you in your adversity, as he would have been in your prosperity, — as he was when we were boys together — so help him God in heaven ! ”

The speaker fell on his face, and his sobs shook the floor of the apartment. “ My first offence,” he continued presently, “ when deprived of your counsel, and seduced by evil companions, was my ruin. I think, I know, that I should have amended, and become useful in my limited sphere to society, but society shut me out, considering that the boy who had robbed his employer, and had undergone punishment for the offence, had better be cast forth to be a thief for evermore. What necessity that I should trace in your hearing the steps by which I descended, — down — down — ever and ever down, until I attacked and robbed you.”

He spoke no more ; the man he addressed had died while he was speaking, and a human soul was absorbed in the Infinite Spirit.

THE SECRET.

BY CAMILLA TOULMIN.

“Thy heart!—I would I could command
Thy heart to open on my sight.
Yet no— I ’ll trust those stars of blue.”

Barry Cornwall.

PART I.—THE MARRIAGE.

To the astonishment of “the world” Sir Percy Borrowdale had remained for ten years a widower, though left such, and without children, at the age of five-and-twenty. Possessed of a princely fortune—tracing his descent through a noble ancestry for five hundred years, and himself more than commonly handsome, there is no wonder that he was looked on as an excellent “match” among the fairest and noblest in the country. His first and very early marriage had been in compliance with his father’s wishes; but though the chosen bride was young and beautiful, and though on her death every mark of respect was paid to her memory, Sir Percy never affected to be inconsolable for her loss. And yet for ten years he did not wed again! Did he prefer the freedom of a single life—or could he not find one of woman-kind to reach the standard of his fastidious taste? At last, when that bun-



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dle of units denominated "the world" was fairly at its wits' end to account for his apathy, Sir Percy astonished it yet more by unexpectedly taking a wife to Castle Borrowdale! There had not been even a hint, in the Morning Post, of his intention conveyed by initials and asterisks. All that appeared one morning was the simple announcement of his nuptials with "Alice, only child of the late Reverend Francis Willoughby;" and the startled "world" knew not at first in which direction to seek for the further information of who and what she was. After a few persevering inquiries, however, people discovered that Lady Borrowdale, though quite portionless, belonged to an old and respectable family, and indeed was once considered heiress to a large property, which had been diverted into another channel, in consequence of her father being unable to produce some necessary documents.

After the first shock was over, the busy world began to talk of the disparity of their age, (adding a few years to the baronet's and deducting somewhat from his lady's—for Alice Willoughby was really two-and-twenty when she married,) and then by degrees to hint at a sacrifice made for station and splendor. Sir Percy was *very* reserved—probably morose and ill-tempered at home,—so people said; and they now remembered, that it had been whispered his first mar-

riage was an unhappy one: no doubt there were faults on both sides; but they dared say the first Lady Borrowdale had had a great deal to put up with. So much for the acidity of the grapes; and though, really, according to this account, Alice was rather to be pitied than otherwise, still the five hundred dear friends who laid claim to a place on her visiting list, by a strange contradiction, began weighing *her* claims to the honor of Sir Percy's hand, as carefully as if he had been a modern Crichton created and perfected for a pattern, and a prize unique. Humanity is made up of strange opposites we know, but according to "the world's" account, this must have been peculiarly the case in the instance of Lady Borrowdale; for every good quality seemed to be attended by the "jailer, *but yet*," ever ready to "usher in some monstrous malefactor." Her figure was beautiful, certainly, but—she wanted another inch in height; her hand was the most perfect in the world, but—of course she knew it, and wore "that emerald ring" to set it off; her complexion was very fine, but—not of the kind which lasts; she was considered handsome certainly, but—it is not every one who admires blue eyes and dark hair. Sweet Alice! the wild flower transplanted to the hot-bed of fashionable life,—little did she dream of the narrow scrutiny to which she had been subject during her first

London season, when, towards its close, Sir Percy and his lady withdrew to the comparative retirement of Castle Borrowdale.

The castle was situated in one of the most beautiful of our southern counties, and within half a mile of the coast. The spot had been chosen by an ancestor of the Borrowdales, a distinguished naval officer in the reign of Elizabeth, and the building, which had belonged to some other family, was altered and enlarged by him in the quaint fashion of the period. It would seem that a love of the glorious ocean — its thronging associations and heart-stirring poetry — had ever since distinguished the family. Many of its members had chosen the navy as a profession, and the castle, whose terraces sloped down to the sea, had for ages been a favorite residence. What a change for the clergyman's daughter, — from the country vicarage overgrown with roses and honeysuckle ; to be mistress of the stately castle !

The marriage of Alice Willoughby had been sudden ; for though known to her by name since childhood, she met Sir Percy for the first time but two months before she became his bride. Her love was built upon the strong foundation of respect and just appreciation of her husband's high qualities ; while every additional mark of tenderness on his part called forth the latent

warmth of her own feelings. But it is quite true that Sir Percy was a reserved man ; his attainments, too, were of a high order ; and though when first attracted to Alice he had felt, by a sort of intuition, that her feminine yet enlarged mind was precisely the one to receive and mirror his own purest and loftiest aspirations, *she* was not equally conscious of the depth of her own character. The natural consequence of this ignorance was, that a slight feeling of awe mingled with her true affection — like a serpent among flowers — and many a thought which her heart longed to shadow forth in words, she repelled from the undefined dread that her simple fancies must to him seem foolish.

Yet very rapidly was this barrier — icy though trifling — melting away ; and even a few days of retirement at the castle after their London gayety did wonders towards effecting a change. Lady Borrowdale was gratified — at first almost astonished — that in their long rides and rambles Sir Percy would listen to her observations on the scenes they visited with interest and attention : thus emboldened she often grew eloquent, till she blushed as she recognized the joy and admiration which sparkled in her husband's countenance. Graver subjects too were sometimes discussed ; and though Sir Percy smiled to discover how often the simple acuteness of her

own mind arrived at the conclusions of philosophers, it was not the fool's smile at woman's wit, but one of pure rejoicing that he had indeed found "a help meet for him." Yes, the shadowy barrier was quickly melting, and they were already the happiest of the happy.

Lady Borrowdale was passionately fond of art, and indeed somewhat skilled in using the pencil herself; no wonder, then, that a favorite haunt of hers was the picture gallery of the castle. One morning she was sauntering there while Sir Percy read his letters, preparatory to their proposed stroll on the beach, when he surprised her in a deep reverie before the portrait of his first wife. The painting was by Lawrence, and sufficiently beautiful to have arrested the gaze of one less enthusiastic than Alice; but so entranced was she that she did not hear Sir Percy's approaching footsteps, and was only aroused by his passing an arm round her waist, and saying, as he drew her affectionately towards him, "Why is my Alice so absorbed?"

She looked into his face with a smile full of truth and confidence, as she replied, "I was wondering if she ever were as dear—or dearer to you than I!"

"Alice, you will not be jealous of the dead, if I own to you that I once loved her—deeply—passionately; but it was reserved for you, dear-

est, to realize my dreams, and make me supremely happy."

"Was she unamiable?" murmured Alice.

"No. The secret of our wretchedness was, that she could not love me."

"Not love you!"

"Even so. Her heart was wholly another's; she had consented to marry me, at the earnest entreaty of her parents, and in consequence of false representations of her lover's unworthiness. But within a month of our bridal, accident discovered to her the cruel deception which had been practised, and her agony was such that further concealment, even if she attempted it, proved vain. Thenceforth we were twain, for though more than once during the last four years of her life I tried to play the wooer, I found she had no heart to give. Latterly, indeed, I suspect her reason gave way, though well she knew if half my fortune could have purchased a release for her, it should have been gained. We were both too proud to take the busy world into our confidence; but you cannot wonder that I long hesitated in making a second choice. Do you know, dearest, that I satisfied myself from your aunt, who had been your companion from childhood, that *you* had never loved, before I suffered myself to think of taking the little Wild Rose to my heart?"

“Wild Rose” was one of the many pet names Sir Percy had bestowed on his bride; yet somehow or other Alice did not at that moment exactly like the application of it. In connection with the story she had just heard, it seemed painfully to remind her of his probable reasons for taking a wife from a country parsonage, instead of seeking for one in the haunts of fashion. Feelings, too, which will by-and-by be developed, flashed across her mind, and a tear fell upon Sir Percy’s hand as she raised it to her lips, and said, in faltering accents, “You know I love you.”

He did not see her face, for bonnet and veil were on in readiness for the promised walk; but he felt the tear, and chiding himself for the cause, he exclaimed, “No more of such dismal stories: I must tell you the letters I have received—there are several enclosures for ‘your ladyship;’ and I doubt not our invitations are accepted. We shall have the castle full of visitors next week; but let me whisper—it is too inhospitable a thought for louder expression—I almost wish these visits over, that we may again be alone. But come, you are ready for our walk.”

PART II.—THE SCANDAL.

“I wonder what our young hostess can find so attractive in that miserable hut down by the

shingles," was the exclamation of Lady Maria Skipton, a spinster of about thirty, and one of the party at Castle Borrowdale.

" Does she find it very attractive ? " replied an " Honorable Captain," for whom Lady Maria was at that moment netting a purse.

" I suppose so, for to my certain knowledge this is the third morning she has spent the best part of an hour there."

" The fisherman, Grant, and his wife are in some sort protégés of Lady Borrowdale," said Mrs. Damer, the most sensible as she was the most elegant woman of the party; " the wife being no other than 'nurse Margery,' of whom I think you have more than once heard our sweet hostess speak."

" Oh ! " murmured Lady Maria, *sotto voce*, though her inquiring mind was not altogether satisfied on the subject.

In one of the drawing-room windows at Castle Borrowdale was fixed a very fine telescope; and excusing herself on some slight pretence from joining the rest of the party, who were bent on riding and boating, there did Lady Maria Skipton station herself the following morning. The castle stood on so great an acclivity that the glass swept the coast for miles; but though her ladyship paid a few minutes' attention to the party in the boat, she found nothing satisfactory in

witnessing their quietness, and so pointed the glass at once in the direction of the fisherman's cottage. Exemplary was her patience — pity it was not tested on a more praiseworthy occasion! Once or twice she resumed her netting ; but after a few stitches always rose to continue her watch. It would seem that her expectations, whatever they might be, were at last verified, for suddenly she exclaimed to herself, "I knew there was a mystery!" Then shifting the telescope very slightly, she again peered through it with apparently increased interest.

It was evening. The glorious autumn moon shone forth in all its splendor, bathing the noble castle and its princely domains in a flood of light. The day had been sultry, and after dinner some of the ladies walked out on a beautiful terrace, on to which Lady Borrowdale's boudoir opened. Distinctly might be heard the waves breaking on the shingles, while ocean lay gazing "with its great round eye" to heaven before them. It was an exquisite scene — one that, where there is a heart to be touched, must awake its best sensibilities. But thus spoke Lady Maria : "Now my dear Mrs. Damer, don't be poetical, for I have something most matter-of-fact to tell you. Indeed, I have been watching all day for an opportunity of speaking to you, and now that Lady Borrowdale and your sister have gone

down to the lawn, we can avoid meeting them for a few minutes with ease."

"I am not at all in a matter-of-fact humor," said Mrs. Damer, with a smile, "listening to the sea's rich music beneath this glorious sky."

"Well! but listen to me. Did you notice how confused Lady Borrowdale was at dinner to-day, when I pretended to think it was Captain Howard with whom she was walking on the beach this morning? He, with all a sailor's bluntness, denied having had that honor, of which I was quite aware before I spoke."

"Now you mention it," returned Mrs. Damer, "I think she did color slightly; but what of that?"

"I could tell you a great deal of it," continued the spinster, "and I think I ought to do so, since, though I dare say no older than myself," (Mrs. Damer was five years her junior,) "you are the only married lady here."

"Good heavens! Lady Maria, what do you mean?"

"Listen! I saw Lady Borrowdale walking with a stranger in the garden behind the fisherman's cottage, and I am certain, from the manner in which she raised her handkerchief to her face, that she was in tears; there was an infant, too, brought out by the fisherman's wife, which she took in her arms and fondled."

"Most probably it was the child of her old servant," replied Mrs. Damer; "I see nothing wonderful in that."

"No such thing; Margery Grant has no children of her own."

"At all events, it does not concern us," continued Mrs. Damer, apparently quite relieved at finding that the communication was nothing more dreadful.

"But I think it does," returned the pertinacious lady—"I have a great regard for Sir Percy," (rumor said Lady Maria had a few years before set her cap very desperately at the baronet,) "in my opinion he has made a very imprudent marriage, and I should not be a bit surprised if his parvenue wife, chit as she is, proves no better than she should be!"

"Hush! hush!" said Mrs. Damer, "I cannot listen to such slander. Lady Borrowdale is our hostess—a gentlewoman in everything; and, I would stake my own character, pure in heart and conduct. Lady Maria, no more of this, we had better return to the drawing-room."

A wonderful interest Lady Maria Skipton must have taken in all the outward-bound vessels, for she really spent a large portion of her mornings at the telescope—watching the shipping, we suppose. How learnedly she talked, too, of—schooners,—brigs,—barks,—and three-

deckers,—according to the various classifications of the genus “ship.” Whether she received it or not, she certainly might have earned the compliment we heard paid to a dear friend of ours by a rough old sailor on his witnessing her nautical acumen and enthusiasm, “ Bless your bright eyes, you deserve to be an admiral’s lady!”—a dignity, which was, no doubt, in his estimation, the most enviable which could fall to the lot of womankind. Yet thrice, when all the rest of the party were absent, Lady Maria suddenly required Sir Percy’s aid in the arrangement of the glass—the last time, however, was fatal to her future pleasure, for after using it for some time with a sort of painful interest, he took the telescope to pieces without a previous word of his intention, and actually put a lens in his pocket on the plea that there was a flaw in it!

But let us take a peep at the fisherman’s cottage, and listen to a conversation of which Lady Maria with all her diligence was unable to gather the purport. Seated on a rustic bench was Lady Borrowdale, evidently in tears, while near her, in deep mourning, stood a handsome gentleman-like man of about thirty: he had been speaking with some earnestness, when Lady Borrowdale replied, “ The struggle of the last week has been almost beyond my strength, both of mind and body. Oh! George, why did I not at first make

my kind, generous husband your friend, instead of meeting you thus by stealth, teaching these poor people a lesson of deception, and forfeiting my own self-esteem?"

"Because, Alice, my sister! you had not courage to spurn the outcast and prodigal, when in the depth of his affliction he threw himself before you. The old leaven is in me," he continued, stamping with violence: "I will not show myself as a beggar to your haughty husband. And I am worse than a beggar, the imputation of dishonor clings to me till I can prove my innocence."

"You forget," said Alice tenderly, and laying her hand on his arm, "that it is only your generosity to me which prevents your character being cleared immediately. Oh, those foolish—foolish letters!—yet, George, you know it was a silly, girlish fancy, and that I never loved him, nay that *I* was the one to break off our childish engagement."

"Fool that I was, after recovering them, to keep them!" cried the stranger; "yet greater was the folly in placing them in the iron chest. I dare not return to open it myself—and for your sake, Alice, I will not send another. Say, would you rather delay for years, perhaps fail altogether, in the recovery of your father's rights, than suffer your husband to know—since his

prejudices are so strong — of your former engagement to — — ?”

“ Oh ! much rather.”

Without another word, George Rushbrook walked a few steps to the beach, and flung a key into the ocean ; then murmuring, “ You will not let my little Alice want,” he moved away.

PART III.—THE KEY.

“ Very sudden Lady Borrowdale’s illness !” exclaimed Lady Maria Skipton, a few hours after the events of the last chapter.

“ I do not think so,” said Mrs. Damer, “ for she has been looking wretchedly ill the last four or five days.”

“ Do you think we ought to continue our visit ?” returned Lady Maria.

“ Sir Percy seems anxiously to wish it ; for though distracted at Lady Borrowdale’s illness, he told me he had urgent reasons for desiring that the party should not be broken up.”

It was quite true that Lady Borrowdale’s frame had sunk beneath the strong mental excitement she had undergone. One fainting fit followed another — medical attendants were called in, and Sir Percy hung over his idolized Alice, in a state of mind bordering on distraction ; for many were the wild and crowding fears which increased his agony. Towards evening

she grew more composed, and fell into a light slumber, Sir Percy alone keeping watch beside her. Many broken exclamations of affection escaped her; and when he took her hand in his, though still without disturbing her, she grasped it warmly. When she did awake she looked up fondly as she said,

“Have I been talking, Percy—and what about?”

“Nothing, dearest, but that which made me happy to hear.”

“Oh, but I have a secret—I must tell you—even though you should not forgive me—and yet it is not my fault—I did not deceive you. Yes, I can tell you now that we are again alone—now those people are gone.”

“No one is gone, Alice.”

“No! then I dreamed they were; but I will tell you—now at once—give me your hand, feel how my heart beats.”

“You must have rest and quiet, you must not speak, dearest. Your husband *has faith in you*, and believes that you have nothing to tell him which he can blush to hear.”

“Bless you for your faith!” and she turned on her pillow and was silent—though now she was relieved by tears.

It was the following morning. The invalid had been removed to her boudoir, and reclined

on a couch ; Sir Percy was seated by her side, his hand again in hers.

“ You remember my telling you of my half-brother,” said Lady Borrowdale, “ and relating to you that I had not seen him for three years ; although I had heard of his marriage with one far beneath him in station ? ”

“ Perfectly.”

“ His was always a complicated character, wild and impetuous in action, constant but in one thing,—his affection to me. He was brought up to the law, and long ago became convinced that the certificates requisite to establish my father’s claim to the estate of S—— were to be obtained. He devoted, I know, much time to the investigation of our claims, but only within this week have I heard how successful he has been.”

“ Then it was your brother with whom I saw you yesterday ? ” interrupted Sir Percy.

“ You saw me ! and did not scorn me ! ”

“ Alice, I had faith — though, that you should have a secret pained me.”

“ But George, from a choice of unworthy associates, has become charged with a share in a nefarious money transaction now occupying the attention of the public, though he assures me — and oh ! I know that whatever his faults, he is not dishonorable — that documents in which he repudiates his partner’s intentions are in the

same iron chest which contains the certificates. But he dares not show himself in London till proofs are established; and he was on his way to France, intending thence to send a confidential agent with his keys, when the accident of the nurse who attended his motherless child refusing to accompany him further, brought to mind the fact that our old servant Margery was settled in the neighborhood. He placed his infant in her hands with confidence, intrusting a message to me, for he was too proud to present himself at the castle in poverty and disgrace. It was by accident we met at the cottage, and — and — if it had been a fortnight ago, when we were alone — or before you told me the story of the first Lady Borrowdale — indeed, Percy, I could never have kept the secret; but — oh! I have more, much more!"

At that moment there was a tap at the door. A servant entered: "My Lady — dame Margery Grant begs to be admitted — having something, she desires me to say, very urgent to communicate."

"Admit her," said Lady Borrowdale, casting an appealing look to her husband. "What happiness," she added, "that whether good or evil, her tidings may be delivered in your presence!"

Margery's handsome face sparkled with joyful astonishment, as Lady Borrowdale bade her say

everything she had to say in the presence of Sir Percy.

“ Dear Miss Alice — I mean ‘ my lady,’ ” said the affectionate creature, “ it does my heart good to find the secret’s out, whatever it was about. Of course, as I said to my good man, it was our bounden duty to keep it safe — and being two of us, you see, to talk about it together, it was n’t so difficult — as it was your ladyship’s wish, and poor Mr. George — though he was before my service in the family — was in trouble of some kind or another — and the dear baby took to me so from the first — ”

But the anxious Alice interrupted Margery by exclaiming, “ My brother ! — has he heard of my illness — did he send you ? ”

“ Alas ! Miss — my lady, we have not seen him this morning. He must have left the cottage at a very early hour, nor somehow, from what he said last night, do I think he will return. My good man fancies he must have been taken up by one of the foreign steamers which he made out with his glass. But what I made bold to come up to the castle about was the key — I am sure it is the identical one he threw into the water yesterday, and behold, by the wisdom of Providence, the tide last night left it within five yards of the cottage ! I was sure, my lady, you valued the key — so here it is.”

"And now, dearest, what are we to do with this mysterious key," said Sir Percy, when once more they were alone; "shall it be sealed up until you hear some account of your brother?"

"No!" said Lady Borrowdale, half rising from her couch, as if with her firm resolution she had recovered health and strength. "No, *you* alone have the right to open that chest, for there are papers in it which concern *me*. All I ask — and I would sue for your compliance on my knees — is that I may be by your side. It must be immediately, for I can know no peace till it is over — why not to-night — by rail-road — for the chest is imbedded in the wall — a secret panel — and we must go to it!"

"Good heavens, Alice!" exclaimed Sir Percy, trembling and turning pale with emotion, "there must be some dreadful mystery — do I guess the fearful riddle? — my fatal doom! — you have loved before — and there are letters!" —

"No — no — not loved — believe me, never! — never," cried Alice, sinking on her knees, and twining her arms round her husband. "I was engaged to one who was unworthy — but I awoke from the delusion — I was the one to break off our intercourse — your wife was not cast off by another! — Hear me! — look at me! or I shall lose my reason," continued Lady Borrowdale, while she succeeded in removing Sir Percy's

hands from the death-like countenance which he had buried in them. "Hear me, even at this moment of agony, offer up thanksgiving that I am your wife—that I dare and can tell, and prove to you, how wholly I am yours. Had you questioned me before our marriage, I should have told you the truth; but I could not have urged it passionately as I do now. I should have lost you! Percy!—Percy, hear me—answer me, one word of love—of the *faith* you had in me yesterday!"

And it was spoken from the heart at last! But who shall tell how fierce that momentary struggle had been between love and reason on one side as they encountered an opinion, hardened by fifteen years of prejudice into a master sentiment!

"At least you will read the letter in which I broke off the engagement," murmured Alice, as her head leaned on Sir Percy's shoulder.

"Nay, nay, dearest, let them all be burnt and forgotten."

"But if I ask it—if I wish it—it was for this I desired to be with you—that you might read *that* first. But think, if your little Alice comes into five thousand a-year, though dearly has it been purchased—what shall you do with it?"

"Settle your wild brother, who seems hitherto to have been the foot-ball of fortune. And

whether or not we must take care of your little namesake!"

"And our visitors," returned Lady Borrowdale,—"surely some of them were to have left us to-day?"

"I besought Lady Maria to remain till the end of the week. I would not have had her leave while *we were twain*."

"But we are **ONE** now and forever!"

A year passed away, working its mighty changes! *Once* again Lady Maria Skipton was a guest at Castle Borrowdale, and with one or two additions the party was the same as before.

"I think Lady Borrowdale has grown very haughty," said Lady Maria, "since she came into her own fortune."

"I do not fancy that has had anything to do with the change," replied Mrs. Damer.

"No! what then?"

"I think she is a little more dignified, from being more conscious of her own just position in society."

"Yet Sir Percy is much less reserved, I think."

"Just as it ought to be," returned Mrs. Damer; "she has ascended — he has descended a step or two; so now they stand upon a level."

“A gentleman-like person her brother!”

“Very.”

“Fortunate in obtaining so fine a situation under government.”

“Very.”

“What a romantic affair that was last year, about Lady Borrowdale meeting him and arranging all about the recovery of her property before Sir Percy knew a word of the affair.”

“Was that the case?” said Mrs. Damer.

“Oh, yes! my maid heard it from one, whose cousin’s wife’s sister was a fellow-servant for three years with Margery Grant.”

Fortunate it is, that the Lady Marias of the world sometimes beat out a grain of truth to a good instead of an evil purpose!

THE TWO SISTERS.: A VILLAGE STORY.

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1848; American Periodicals

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THE TWO SISTERS.

A VILLAGE STORY.

BY MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

THE pretty square farm-house, standing at the corner where Kibes Lane crosses the brook, or the brook crosses Kibes Lane, (for the first phrase, although giving by far the closest picture of the place, does, it must be confessed, look rather Irish,) and where the aforesaid brook winds away by the side of another lane, until it spreads into a river-like dignity, as it meanders through the sunny plain of Hartley Common, and finally disappears amidst the green recesses of Perge Wood — that pretty square farm-house, half hidden by the tall elms in the flower court before it, which, with the spacious garden and orchard behind, and the extensive barn, yards, and outbuildings, so completely occupies one of the angles formed by the crossing of the land and the stream,— that pretty farm-house contains one of the happiest and most prosperous families in Aberleigh, the large and thriving family of Farmer Evans.

Whether from skill, or from good fortune, or, as is most probable, from a lucky mixture of both,

everything goes right in his great farm. His crops are the best in the parish ; his hay is never spoiled ; his cattle never die ; his servants never thieve ; his children are never ill. He buys cheap and sells dear ; money gathers about him like a snow-ball ; and yet, in spite of all this provoking and intolerable prosperity, everybody loves Farmer Evans. He is so hospitable, so good-natured, so generous, so homely ! There, after all, lies the charm. Riches have not only not spoilt the man, but they have not altered him. He is just the same in look, and word, and way, that he was thirty years ago, when he and his wife, with two sorry horses, one cow, and three pigs, began the world at Dean-Gate, a little bargain of twenty acres, two miles off :—aye, and his wife is the same woman !—the same frugal, tidy, industrious, good-natured Mrs. Evans, so noted for her activity of tongue and limb, her good looks, and her plain dressing : as frugal, as good-natured, as active, and as plain-dressing Mrs. Evans at forty-five as she was at nineteen, and, in a different way, almost as good-looking.

Their children—six “boys,” as Farmer Evans promiscuously calls them, whose ages vary from eight to eight-and-twenty—and three girls, two grown up, and one the youngest of the family,—are just what might be expected from parents so simple and so good. The young men, intelligent

and well-conducted ; the boys docile and promising ; and the little girl as pretty a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked poppet, as ever was the pet and plaything of a large family. It is, however, with the eldest daughters that we have to do.

Jane and Patty Evans were as much alike as hath often befallen any two sisters not born at one time :—for, in the matter of twin children, there has been a series of puzzles ever since the days of Dromios. Nearly of an age, (I believe that at this moment both are turned of nineteen, and neither has reached twenty,) exactly of a stature, (so high that Frederick would have coveted them for wives for his tall regiment,) with hazel eyes, large mouths, full lips, white teeth, brown hair, clear, healthy complexions, and that sort of nose which is neither Grecian, nor Roman, nor aquiline, nor *le petit nez retrousse*, that some persons prefer to them all ; but a nose which, moderately prominent, and sufficiently well shaped, is yet, as far as I know, anonymous, although it be perhaps as common and as well-looking a feature as is to be seen on an English face.

Altogether, they were a pair of tall and comely maidens, and, being constantly attired in garments of the same color and fashion, looked, at all times, so much alike, that no stranger ever dreamed of knowing them apart ; and even their acquaintances were rather accustomed to think

and speak of them generally as "the Evans," than as the separate individuals, Jane and Patty. Even those who did pretend to distinguish the one from the other, were not exempt from mistakes, which the sisters, Patty especially, who delighted in the fun so often produced by the unusual resemblance, were apt to favor by changing places in a walk, or slipping from one side to the other at a country tea party, or playing a hundred innocent tricks to occasion at once a grave blunder and a merry laugh.

Old Dinah Goodwin, for instance, who, being rather purblind, was jealous of being suspected of seeing less clearly than her neighbors, and had defied even the Evans' to puzzle her discernment — seeking in vain on Patty's hand the cut finger which she had dressed on Jane's, ascribed the incredible cure to the merits of her own incomparable salve, and could hardly be undeceived, even by the pulling off of Jane's glove, and the exhibition of the lacerated digital sewed round by her own bandage.

Young George Bailey too, the greatest beau in the parish, having betted at a Christmas party that he would dance with every pretty girl in the room, lost his wager (which Patty had overheard) by that saucy damsels's slipping into her sister's place, and persuading her to join her own unconscious partner; so that George danced twice with

Patty, and not at all with Jane. A flattering piece of malice, which proved, as the young gentleman (a rustic exquisite of the first water) was pleased to assert, that Miss Patty was not displeased with her partner. How little does a vain man know of womankind ! If she had liked him, she would not have played the trick for the mines of Golconda.

In short, from their school-days, when Jane was chidden for Patty's bad work, and Patty slapped for Jane's bad spinning, down to this their prime of womanhood, there had been no end to the confusion produced by this remarkable instance of family likeness.

And yet Nature, who sets some mark of individuality upon her meanest productions, making some unnoted difference between the lambs dropped from one ewe, the robins bred in one nest, the flowers growing on one stalk, and the leaves hanging from one tree, had not left these young maidens without one great and permanent distinction—a natural and striking dissimilarity of temper. Equally industrious, affectionate, happy and kind ; each was kind, happy, affectionate, and industrious in a different way. Jane was grave ; Patty was gay. If you heard a laugh or a song, be sure it was Patty ; she who smiled, for certain was Patty ; she who jumped the stile, when her sister opened the gate, was Patty ; she

who chased the pigs from the garden as merrily as if she were running a race, so that the pigs did not mind her, was Patty.

On the other hand, she that so carefully was making, with its own ravelled threads, an invisible darn in her mother's handkerchief, and hearing her little sister read the while; she that so patiently was feeding, one by one, two broods of young turkeys; she that so pensively was watering her own bed of delicate and somewhat rare flowers,—the pale hues of the Alpine pink, or the alabaster blossoms of the white evening primrose, whose modest flowers, dying off into a blush, resemble her own character, was Jane.

Some of the gossips of Aberleigh used to assert that Jane's sighing over the flowers, as well as the early steadiness of her character, arose from an engagement to my lord's head gardener, an intelligent, sedate, and sober young Scotsman. Of this I know nothing. Certain it is that the prettiest and newest plants were always to be found in Jane's little flower border, and if Mr. Archibald Maclean did sometimes come to look after them, I do not see that it was any business of anybody's.

In the mean time, a visitor of a different description arrived at the farm. A cousin of Mrs. Evans' had been as successful in trade as her husband had been in agriculture, and he had now

sent his only son to become acquainted with his relations, and to spend some weeks in their family.

Charles Foster was a fine young man, whose father was neither more nor less than a rich linen-draper, in a great town ; but whose manners, education, mind, and character might have done honor to a far higher station. He was, in a word, one of nature's gentlemen ; and in nothing did he more thoroughly show his own taste and good breeding, than by entering entirely into the homely ways and old-fashioned habits of his country cousins. He was delighted with the simplicity, frugality, and industry, which blended well with the sterling goodness, and genuine abundance of the great English farm-house. The young women especially pleased him much. They formed a strong contrast with anything that he had met with before. No finery ! no coquetry ! no French ! no piano ! It is impossible to describe the sensation of relief and comfort with which Charles Foster, sick of musical misses, ascertained that the whole dwelling did not contain a single instrument, except the bassoon on which George Evans was wont, every Sunday at church, to excruciate the ears of the whole congregation. He liked both sisters. Jane's softness and considerateness engaged his full esteem ; but Patty's innocent playfulness suited best with his own

high spirits, and animated conversation. He had known them apart from the first, and indeed denied that the likeness was at all puzzling, or more than is usual between sisters, and secretly thought Patty as much prettier than her sister as she was avowedly merrier. In doors and out, he was constantly at her side ; and before he had been a month in the house, all its inmates had given Charles Foster as a lover to his young cousin ; and she, when rallied on the subject, cried fie ! and pish ! and pshaw ! and wondered how people could talk such nonsense, and liked to have such nonsense talked to her better than anything in the world.

Affairs were in this state, when one night Jane appeared even graver and more thoughtful than usual, and far, far sadder. She sighed deeply ; and Patty, for the two sisters shared the same little room, inquired tenderly "What ailed her ?" The inquiry seemed to make Jane worse. She burst into tears, whilst Patty hung over her and soothed her. At length, she aroused herself by a strong effort ; and turning away from her affectionate comforter, said in a low tone : " I have had a great vexation to-night, Patty ; Charles Foster has asked me to marry him."

" Charles Foster ! Did you say Charles Foster ?" asked poor Patty, trembling, unwilling even

to trust her own senses against the evidence of her heart ; " Charles Foster ? "

" Yes, our cousin, Charles Foster."

" And you have accepted him ? " inquired Patty in a hoarse voice.

" Oh no ! no ! no ! Do you think I have forgotten poor Archibald ? Besides, I am not the person whom he ought to have asked to marry him ; false and heartless as he is. I would not be his wife ; cruel, unfeeling, unmanly as his conduct has been ! No ! not if he would make me queen of England ! "

" You refused him then ? "

" No, my father met us suddenly, just as I was recovering from the surprise and indignation that at first struck me dumb. But I shall refuse him most certainly ; — the false, deceitful, ungrateful villain ! "

" Poor father ! He will be disappointed. So will mother."

" They will be disappointed and both angry — but not at my refusal. Oh, how they will despise him ! " added Jane ; and poor Patty, melted by her sister's sympathy, and touched by an indignation most unusual in that mild and gentle girl, could no longer command her feelings, but flung herself on the bed in that agony of passion and grief which the first great sorrow seldom fails to excite in a young heart.

After a while she resumed the conversation.
"We must not blame him too severely. Perhaps my vanity made me think his attentions meant more than they really did, and you had all taken up the notion. But you must not speak of him so unkindly. He has done nothing but what is natural. You are so much wiser and better than I am, my own dear Jane!" He laughed and talked with me: but he felt your goodness,—and he was right. I was never worthy of him, and you are; and if it were not for Archibald, I should rejoice from the bottom of my heart," continued Patty, sobbing, "if you would accept"—but unable to finish her generous wish, she burst into a fresh flow of tears; and the sisters, mutually and strongly affected, wept in each other's arms, and were comforted.

That night, Patty cried herself to sleep: but such sleep is not of long duration. Before dawn she was up, and pacing, with restless irritability, the dewy grass-walks of the garden and orchard. In less than half an hour, a light, elastic step (she knew the sound well!) came rapidly behind her; a hand (oh, how often had she thrilled at the touch of that hand!) tried to draw hers under his own; while a well-known voice addressed her in the softest and tenderest accents; "Patty, my own sweet Patty! have you thought of what I said to you last night?"

"To me?" replied Patty, with bitterness.

"Aye, to be sure; to your dear self! Do you not remember the question I asked you, when your good father, for the first time unwelcome, joined us so suddenly that you had not time to say Yes? And will you not say Yes now?"

"Mr. Foster," replied Patty, with some spirit, "you are under a mistake here. It was to Jane that you made a proposal yesterday evening; and you are taking me for her at this moment."

"Mistake you for your sister! Propose to Jane! Incredible! impossible! You are jesting."

"Then he mistook Jane for me last night,— and he is no deceiver!" thought Patty to herself, as, with smiles beaming brightly through her tears, she turned round at his reiterated prayers, and yielded the hand he sought to his pressure. "He mistook her for me! he, that defied us to perplex him!"

And so it was; an unconscious and unobserved change of place, as either sister resumed her station beside little Betty, who had scampered away after a glow-worm, added to the deepening twilight, and the lover's natural embarrassment, had produced the confusion which gave poor Patty a night's misery, to be compensated by a lifetime of happiness. Jane was almost as glad to lose a lover as her sister was to regain

one. Charles is gone home to his father's to make preparations for his bride; Archibald has taken a great nursery garden, and there is some talk in Aberleigh that the marriage of the two sisters is to be celebrated on the same day.

UNCLE BENJIE'S RING.

BY G. C. P.

MANY a long summer day have I dreamed away in the pleasant bowers and under the stately oaks that adorned the old manor-house of F——, and in the cool old rooms, too, unspoiled by modern windows, dim and shady, even in blazing July. True, these windows had their disadvantages—they were somewhat too high, and rather overgrown outside by honeysuckles and moss-roses; but there were stained glass doors, opening to the garden in various directions, which led you through bowers of fragrant limes to terraced parterres. In this paradise, as, indeed, it appeared to me after my dusty chambers in London, I used to spend as much time as I could snatch from my professional avocations. The family partook, as much as the house, of former times. Squire Ratcliffe was the best specimen I ever saw of a genuine English country gentleman, and his daughters were warm-hearted, unsophisticated girls, radiant in health and good humor. The children of the eldest son, who had been left a widower, were added to the family

group ; and a happier or a merrier one it would have been difficult to find.

Since my last visit, however, an addition had been made to it, which, judging from the letters I received, did not appear to have contributed to their mirth. This was the squire's younger brother — (though younger, he looked years his senior) — a dyspeptic, yellow-looking invalid, not long returned from India — who had sought the home of his childhood in the vain hope that its soothing influence would renovate the health he had lost, and, still worse, the mind he had soured and irritated, under the burning sun of the East. He was warmly welcomed at F—— : the squire really loved his brother, and, perhaps, as he was wealthy and childless, some slight touch of self-interest mingled with the wish to keep him amongst them, as it soon became apparent he would be anything but a pleasant addition to the family. Many and loud were the complaints of the younger branches against Uncle Benjie, (for so they chose to abbreviate Benjamin;) and even the squire himself, notwithstanding his equanimity, was sometimes annoyed by his peevishness and ill-humor. But with regard to the children, I really sympathized with him, for they were a most undisciplined set ; and often had I suffered myself from their inroads into my apartment, which were generally followed by the

loss of some perhaps indispensable article of my toilet. Their noise, too, was terrific, and it was vain to remonstrate—the squire loved it; the eldest girl, Caroline, who ought to have taken her mother's place, and kept something like order, was wholly occupied in assisting the curate of the parish in visiting and instructing the poor, and the younger ones only assisted to increase the noise. They positively hated their unfortunate uncle; they even disliked the Indian-like atmosphere of sandal-wood, by which he was always surrounded; and one curly-headed rogue actually bestowed a bottle of choice perfume upon the rough crest and velvet ears of an old deer-hound who shared their gambols, much to the disgust of the dog. The unfortunate nabob, as may be supposed, did not become *more* amiable under all these provocations; he grew daily more irritable and dyspeptic; he could not sleep, and all the sedatives of the family apothecary failed of any beneficial effect. If he *did* sleep, he was tormented with unquiet dreams, and often spent the night in contending with imaginary robbers for his dearly acquired treasure. He was of a suspicious nature, and often thought that the trifles he missed, which were, in reality, abstracted by the children, was part of a conspiracy to rob him amongst the servants; and circumstances seemed really at last to justify his suspi-

cions, for one after another various valuable articles disappeared in a most mysterious manner. The children declared he hid them himself, on purpose to torment people ; and the servants, who were apparently honest and faithful, did their utmost to discover the culprit, but in vain. At length a purse, containing some valuable coins, and, worse than all, a ring of still greater value, disappeared—they certainly were curious things to steal, but they were gone—and Uncle Benjie was distracted. He valued the ring more than anything he possessed: it was of massive Indian gold, engraved with eastern characters, and was the admiration of the children as it dangled on his skinny finger. It was always deposited at night in a sandal-wood box, that stood upon his dressing-table—box and ring had vanished !

Nothing could exceed the consternation of the whole house, which was increased by vague rumors of a figure in white seen to glide along the garden-walks by moonlight. This story was, naturally enough, treated by the younger Mr. Ratcliffe as an invention of the guilty parties ; and the poor squire, in a paroxysm of despair, wrote to me, requesting, if I loved him, I would instantly repair to F——, and bring all my legal knowledge to bear upon this painful subject. I obeyed the summons, delighted, on

any pretext, to escape into the country, and anticipating some amusement from the cause of my visit. I found, however, on my arrival, that it was no laughing matter; my old friend looked perplexed and unhappy, the nabob forgot his physical infirmities, and raged like a Bengal tiger; the excitement had evidently so quickened the action of his liver that he appeared a new man. He allowed me *one* day for my investigation, at the end of which time, if I could make out nothing satisfactory, he protested he would put the affair into the hands of the magistrates. The servants were anxious for the fullest investigation; but the most remarkable change was in the children, who crept about the house in comparative silence, and avoided Uncle Benjie's door as if they expected the ghost in white, hinted at before, to issue forth. The only person who appeared unconcerned on the subject was Miss Caroline, and I was rather displeased that she continued her walks with the curate, without appearing to care for the discomfort which prevailed at home.

Upon retiring for the night, I summoned to my dressing-room the old lady who, having officiated for nearly half a century as nurse and house-keeper in the family, had presided over the establishment since Mrs. Ratcliffe's death. A flood of tears was her first reply to my questions, but

when these subsided I could learn nothing that could in the least tend to elucidate the mystery; on the contrary, what she told me rather increased it, as it appeared the valuables missing disappeared without the slightest trace of their exit. I touched upon the subject of the ghost, and, after looking around the room as if she half expected it would appear, she assured me that the keeper had seen it more than once, gliding about the walks below the grotto. With this information she retired, leaving me to my own meditations, which, it must be owned, were rather of a perplexing nature.

What to do — what steps to take, I knew not. I paced the room till, between my perplexities and the heat of the night, I was in a perfect fever. It was vain to attempt to sleep, so, throwing myself into a chair by the open window, I tried to calm my mind with gazing on the fair scene without. Gradually the softness of the hour beguiled me; I sunk into a dreamy reverie — almost, I suppose, into sleep — when the large stable clock struck one. I started up, as the dull, heavy sound fell upon my ear. I looked again from the window: surely — I rubbed my eyes — but there, surely, by that bed of geraniums I knew so well, stood a tall, white figure; it moved suddenly forwards, and threw down a flower-pot — I saw it fall distinctly. To rush down stairs

through one of the glass doors, (I believe they were never fastened,) and out into the garden, was the work of a moment,— but nothing could I see but the flowers, looking almost as brilliant as in the day in the flood of light which so picturesquely softened the grotesque statues which our ancestors supposed *ornamented* their terraced gardens. In no mood, however, to pause over the beauties of the scene, I rushed on to the spot where the vision had appeared; there lay the broken flower-pot, proving to me it was no trick of the imagination. I paused, breathless, for some indication of the path it had taken, and, seeing a small gate open which led to the grotto, I rushed down the steep and rough path with so little caution, that, catching my foot in the moss-covered root of a tree, I fell on my face in the bushes. And here, gentle reader, I must remain a few minutes, while I indulge in a short description of one of the sweetest spots in the universe. About half way down the above mentioned path, a little to the right, stands a grotto, from whence, between the trees, which have been suffered to grow a little too wildly, you catch glimpses of the opposite river. Descending still lower, you find yourself in a tangled bower, impervious to either sun or shower, luxuriously cool and fresh in the hottest day. On one side of this romantic little glen, the ground rises so

precipitously, and the trees grow into such grotesque entanglements, as to bar all entrance ; but on another is a winding path I have often followed, and just in the very spot you would wish, lies a fallen tree, where, with some pleasant book, or in commune with your own heart, you might forget time and space. On one side, too, is a natural cavern, of no great depth, and generally full of dead leaves, which always seemed to me admirably adapted for an ice-house. I have heard Mr. Ratcliffe say, that, excepting that the trees grow every year wilder and more entangled, the spot remains the same as when, in the boyhood of his brother and himself, it was their favorite place to play at hide-and-seek. But descriptions are proverbially tiresome, so I return to my tale. Extricating myself with some trouble from the thick bower of fragrant seringa into which I had fallen, and shaking off the snowy blossoms, I proceeded more slowly and carefully until I reached the turning to the grotto. And here I paused a little to reflect on my situation. I was alone, unarmed — even without a stick — and beyond the reach of aid, unless the keeper or his assistants chanced to be within call ; the thief, if thief it was, was, doubtless, prepared for resistance. This, then, was the pretended ghost ; the very word, in idea only, produced an unpleasant feeling. Pshaw ! do

ghosts open gates, and throw down flower-pots ? I advanced to the grotto ; a bat, apparently more frightened than myself, flew out in my face ; I persevered, however, and looked in—it was empty. I sat down a few moments to consider what I should do next : a rustling sound caught my ear—the night was perfectly still. I advanced to the brow of the hill, and distinctly heard a footstep among the last year's leaves, that lay deep in some parts of the dell below. I crept lower down, and endeavored to peep between the trees, but the foliage was so thick I could see nothing. I then began, with a beating heart, to descend the hill, still hearing at intervals the leaves cracking under the tread of the foot below, when, just before I reached the fallen tree I mentioned before, I came suddenly upon the object of my search. About twenty or thirty yards before me was a tall figure, robed in white, or some very light color ; the back was turned towards me, and it was advancing with hasty step to the rocky cavern at the extremity of the glen. An involuntary exclamation escaped me, but it heeded not. I followed, but it did not appear to hear my steps, though I sunk almost ankle deep in dry leaves. Swiftly and steadily it advanced to the cavern, then stooped as if about to enter. With the strength and energy of despair, I sprang forward, grappled, and rolled

over with — Uncle Benjie ! Could I believe my senses ? — Was I awake ? I assisted him to rise, placed him on the fallen tree, and myself beside him. It *was* Uncle Benjie, clad in a long white dressing-gown, flowered with gold pagodas. He stared at me vacantly, and spoke in such an incoherent way I thought he must be mad. Suddenly a thought struck me,—he had been walking in his sleep. I spoke gently and quietly to him, and with some trouble half led, half carried him into the house, and, calling up his brother, we succeeded in rousing him from his lethargic stupor, when I related to him the events of the night. Instead, however, of following our advice, which was to take one of Squib's composing mixtures and go quietly to bed, he swore at the doctor, and throwing on some of his clothes in great haste, rushed out of the house. We followed, and arrived together at the cavern in the glen, where, diving under the leaves, he brought out first the purse and the ring, box and all, and, by degrees, all the lost treasures that had caused such vexation and perplexities. After staring at one another a little, we burst into a hearty laugh, in which Uncle Benjie cordially joined, and we had some trouble to persuade him to go to bed after all his nocturnal rambles. He rose an altered man. In a conversation we had together afterwards, he told me that, fancying he was

robbed in his brother's house, the dread of losing his valuable effects haunted him day and night; and to this, acting upon a disordered body, he attributed the extraordinary feats of somnambulism he perpetrated. He had been a sleep-walker, too, he told me, when a boy. The rocky dell, he said, had been the favorite haunt of his childhood, which accounted for his choosing it as the spot for depositing his treasures. His gratitude to me was unbounded, but the only proof of it I would consent to receive was, that the ring he valued so much, and which was really curious, should be left to me at his death. Uncle Benjie is now as much beloved by the children as he was formerly disliked; they are even reconciled to his Indian perfume, which they used to declare so suffocating. My next visit to the manor-house is to be on the occasion of Miss Caroline's marriage to the before mentioned curate, who hopes soon to become rector through the kindness of Uncle Benjie.

WOMAN AND DOMESTICS.

BY CATHERINE BARMBY.

THAT there is a vast amount of evil and suffering throughout the ramifications of society, is the general admission. It should also be evident that a great mass of the misery endured is caused by the imperfect forms which constitute our present social condition. Appeals are made to the legislature, and petitions are forwarded to the government, with the expectation that relief will be obtained ; while, at the same time, it may clearly be seen that neither the legislature nor the government can fully effect the remedy, and that we are neglecting our own duty, and disobeying the dictates of our common sense, in asking others to do that which we can best do ourselves.

To reorganize society, to render it more blessed and happier, its domestic condition has to be improved. Now domestics form a sphere which belongs essentially to woman. It is her absolute province ; in it she reigns queen, and man cannot, if he would, deprive her of her sovereignty, because it has been allotted to her by that wisdom whose decrees human power or will is not able to withstand. Think of it as we may, the

laws and order of society are, in their origin, divine—hence the woe that follows our transgressions. If we sow the storm, we reap the whirlwind. So fares it in all parts of God's earth. And thus, it is not so much contradictory change, as further development, that is needed.

Customs and habits, private and public manners, dress, and the whole circle of home duties, are included in domestics. It is surely as important then as politics, and as difficult to regulate. Yet it is not the Houses of Representatives that can legislate for it; for the reason that women do not deliberate, and cannot pass their judgment, in them.

The workings of society in its state of civilization have revealed, partially, the true order of nature in the division of duties for the sexes. To the woman, the interior or household economics; to the man, the exterior or politics. Both are valuable, and have elements in common together. Man should not be entirely ignorant of home management, nor should woman be left unacquainted with laws and governmental policy. Their own and their children's welfare are connected with both; and therefore, to the mother and the father, they stand each as a great subject. Civilization, hitherto, it is not to be lost sight of, has influenced woman only materially

in the discharge of her home duties. It has taught her to barter, to buy the cap and gown cheap, careless of the ruin she may bring down upon the seller. Competition, in its lowest grades, has received the greatest encouragement from woman. The sufferings of fellow-creatures have not been thought of, when shillings and six-pences were to be saved. Dress and furniture, company and so-called amusement, the rivalry, jealousy, and wretchedness they have engendered, render them in their very enumeration terrifying, and make us hurry to get away from their reviewal.

Civilization has not finished her work. She, like an educating parent, will perfect in her adult what she could only commence with her infant children. She will now teach woman spiritually the devotion of her home duties!—to become a priestess, even at her hearth-side! Elevated and strengthened, her footsteps on the earth rendered steady and secure, how rejoicingly will she live in the land where she now mourns and dwells a stranger!

The instruction of woman in her higher, more spiritual, home duties, is one of the greatest wants of the age. It is becoming more and more apparent, and, if not speedily attended to, will be a most serious drawback to the progress now sought to be made.

The delicate machinery of domestic life is ever at work, producing countless shades of joy and gloom. It is from the flame of the domestic hearth that the warmth and lustre of some of life's most refined relations are derived. Would that this flame shone more brightly now! beamed forth more divinely, holily! That the abodes of our people were more cheered by its rays! That the dwellers at our hearths were more conscious of its presence. How general is poverty! how wide-spread is misery! Fearful is the unrighteousness of society! frightful are its responsibilities!

Why goes forth that man this Saturday evening from the roof under which his children live? Why turns he from their engaging little attempts to detain him, and roughly moves them away, while he loves them dearly? Why sits another by his fire, sullen, discontented, unwilling to speak the kindly word, while his heart is yearning for converse and enjoyment? Why flies the cruel speech to her for whom the bosom's strongest affection is nourished? And why, searching into deeper depths, why does man become so often a tyrant, so often a criminal, in his home? Truth has to be told; but, oh! listen to it kindly, for it is hard to tell.

It is because woman does not truly appreciate her mission in domestic life. Under the present

conditions of existence, she has become weighed down by cares. As a wife she is different from what she was as a maiden. She is ever employed in drudgery for her children and her household. She neglects her dress ; she forgets her manners. Her husband sees the change, and does not perhaps find sufficient excuse for it from the conditions she labors under. He flies to the tavern and billiard table. And she increases in sourness and asperity as she increases in years. That much of this is owing to the present circumstances of social life, is true ; but that much of it is chargeable to a sad submission to those circumstances, is also but too true. It is more or less in the power of women to make their domestic life more attractive to their husbands, and more holy in its disciplines and ends, than they now do. A greater regularity in time — a greater simplicity in dress — a more determined adherence to that which is right in one's own eyes, rather than that which is well thought of in the eyes of others — an orderly apportioning of various periods for different occupations — would make evenings at home pass away very differently to what, in the great majority of cases, they now are doing.

If the wife will begin to wish her husband to read the last new periodical, while she is mending his stockings ; if, even while at work herself,

she will now and then talk to her children of that which is good and pleasant, as a priestess should talk — and every mother has a priestly office — she will hallow and lighten her own labor, and for her household a blessed reform will, in domestics, have commenced.

Oh, for a power to hasten this period! Oh, that one might abide the dawning of that bright day when domestic love and family enjoyment crown the great social destiny of humanity! Then might one depart in peace, and the beams of the *good time come* be over us, and death be hallowed by the sanctification of life. Follow out God's laws, work in his holy order, do all things in season, leaving nought undone that should be done, and full surely this divine, this perfecting labor of human existence, will be consummated.

THE IMAGE OF LOVE IN CLAY.

MRS WHITE

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1855; American Periodicals
pg. 230

THE IMAGE OF LOVE IN CLAY.

BY MRS. WHITE.

“It is very pretty, very pretty indeed,” said Abel Hardstaff, looking from the ceiling with its painted flower wreath and plaster of paris Cupid, suspended, with outspread wings, from the centre—a myth, anticipatory, as it seemed to the calculating bachelor, which had better have been left out in his friend’s matrimonial preparations.

“Very pretty! But I think, had I been hurried into asking a woman to marry me at a time when I was short of money and out of work, I should not have spent on mere ornament what you may want in a day or two for absolute necessities.”

“Pshaw! a mere trifle,” ejaculated Nathan Slack, with a movement of the head which seemed to throw off with a jerk the necessity of his friend’s censures. “Besides,” he added, with a spruce air, “one does not get married every day.”

“Just so,” responded Abel, gravely; “but every day afterwards you will find *that you are married*, and that, with working men like you and I, it is best beginning as we intend to go on; the importance of the wedding day, in my estimation, is only as it affects the days to come. And now let me look at the other room. Have you got a Cupid there also?”

“No,” exclaimed Nathan, delighted to turn the conversation from prudence to mythology. “My Venus will bring him with her; for, between ourselves, Abel, she is the sweetest girl I have ever seen; such perfect features, and blue eyes, and bright hair, and such a complexion! I flatter myself I have met on the *stage*” (Mr. Slack had been a scene painter, and loved to consider himself as belonging to *the profession*) “as much and varied beauty as most men; but my little wife (that is to be) surpasses all.”

“It is only right that she should in your eyes,” observed Abel Hardstaff, dryly; “but I think you seem to have made her prettiness the most important matter in your estimation of her. Is she good tempered, sensible, industrious?”

“She is a first-rate needlewoman, I understand,” said Nathan; “and as for her temper being good, I can swear for it. Her sensibleness,” he added, with a little laugh at the conceit, (not the less conceited for all that,)

“I think she has shown in accepting your humble servant.”

I am afraid, in Abel Hardstaff’s opinion, this was any thing but a convincing proof of the quality in question ; for he said nothing, but, walking into the small, ill-furnished, and ill-ventilated bed room, surveyed it with a dissatisfied air, and came out again.

“ There isn’t much in it,” said Nathan, deprecatingly ; “ but we shall get things about us by and by.”

“ There are no drawers, and the bed’s a flock one,” rejoined Hardstaff. “ You haven’t studied your wife’s comfort much.”

“ O, she must make shift as well as others have done,” replied the scene painter. “ Rome wasn’t built in a day.”

“ Then why not have begun these here ? ” continued Abel, looking up once more at the wreath and the Cupid. “ You are going the way to make your wife a slattern. Women can’t keep their clothes to rights nor their husband’s either if they have no place to put them away ; and, instead of reserving your best room for the use of your acquaintance, why not have made this the bed room, and nestled all the neatness and cosiness you could into it ? Here you have breathing space and light, and there you have scarcely room to put a chair on any side between the bed and the wall ; and whatever light and

air there would be is kept off by the narrow, closed-in yard on which it looks."

"What! and would you have *that* the parlor, then?" exclaimed Nathan, now thoroughly annoyed at what he deemed the hypercritical remarks of his friend.

"Rather than have it in the bed room, decidedly," said Abel. "Why, if you and your wife had the best health and tempers in the world, that room would be enough to destroy them. Two persons shut up in that space would exhaust all the wholesome air it could contain before half the night was passed; in which case you would rise feeling lassitude and low spirits and a sense of imperfect rest, which naturally tends to irritability of temper, loss of appetite, and finally absolute ill health."

"Well," exclaimed Nathan, "if I had known you were going to preach me such a sermon, I should have taken care not to have asked your opinion about the matter."

"That is showing me your value of the opinion, at all events," said Hardstaff, smiling. "And yet, Nathan, it is because I feel deeply interested in the step you are taking that I speak so freely to you. I know May Allen, (and his eye softened and his voice grew lower as he spoke;) I know her to be gentle and kindly in her disposition, and industrious and beautiful; but her meekness will become reserve if not nursed into strength by

perfect confidence, and *truth*, and kindness ; and her small white hands, so skilful in the nice duties of a lady's toilet and the business of a seamstress, will require double work on your part to keep them so. Such hands, of all others, are the most untidy when brought down to the drudgery of a poor man's hearth. And, Nathan, there is something in her beauty," (and the workman spoke tenderly, as if it could be marred by mentioning it,) "something in her transparent color, fined off, as it were, till one scarcely knows where the shade of health ends and hectic commences, that tells me her life is as delicate as her complexion, and that any roughness, or coarse words, or unkindness, Nathan," (and Hardstaff looked fixedly at him while he spoke,) "would surely kill her."

" You appear to have paid such particular attention to her," said Slack, now thoroughly angry, " and to be so interested in her treatment, that I wonder you did not marry her yourself, to make sure that she would be taken care of."

" She would not have had me had I offered," replied Abel, calmly.

" Or, as the next best turn you could have done," continued Nathan, " advised her against marrying me."

" I would have done so," rejoined Hardstaff, firmly, " had there been any use in it ; but, like all the rest of

her sex, she is blinded by her preference, and would only have scorned me for my pains. When it is too late, you will both waken to find you have mistaken a *clay love* for an immortal one." And, so saying, he hurried down stairs and out of the house, and though his dinner hour had not expired, and he certainly had not yet dined, proceeded straight to the printing office where he worked, and, laying aside his coat and hat, set himself quickly to some employment, upon the principle that labor physics pain.

In the mean while, Nathan Slack, highly indignant at what had passed, wrote a polite note to a person who had sent for him to regild the letters of his name over his shop front, informing him of an urgent business engagement elsewhere, and then retired to a public house to drown his annoyance in beer; in which he so well succeeded that, after several failures to retain his perpendicular on his way home, he arrived there shortly after midnight, in such a state of mental and personal muddiness as threatened to leave him without either habiliments or recollection for the events of the morrow, when he was to make May Allen, the pretty lady's maid, his wife.

He woke so late that, though a dim remembrance of his engagement to meet her at church that morning made him hurry up from his bed, he had neither time

and scarcely sense to remove the soil of the kennel from his clothes, which were his best, and I believe I may say his only ones, and started off in stupid haste to complete the most solemn engagement in this life.

Just within the church door, in a high, old-fashioned seat, sat May Allen, in her simple bonnet and white dress, the picture of daintiest neatness. No father, nor sister, nor any other relative was with her to countenance the step she was taking. She was alone here as she had been in the world almost from infancy, and like many of her sex, distrustful of her own strength, had accepted the first protection that offered, from an instinct of its need rather than from any well-grounded affection for the offerer. An orphan, accustomed to all the sorrowful trials that in their loneliness and dependence wait upon the poor and unprotected of her sex, especially when to youth is added the charm of a pretty face and graceful person, the attentions of Nathau Slack had wakened certain feelings of gratitude and pleasure which she mistook for love—a mistake as great as she had made in construing the reserve and indifference of Abel Hardstaff into apathy, and the selfish eagerness of the scene painter into affection. However, here was the wedding day, and close at hand the beginning of the end of her delusion.

A step paused at the pew door, the handle turned,

and May, who felt it was Nathan, timidly raised her eyes to see, not the trim bridegroom of her anticipations, but a disgusting-looking man, bearing in his neglected appearance marks of recent intemperance and unseemly haste, who, dropping down beside her, whispered a falsehood in apology for his tardiness, assuring her that he had been obliged to attend to some work in the city of a nature not to be neglected, and that he had only finished it in time to reach the church without making any change in his dress.

Poor May! Not even the thrifty industry implied in his excuse could counterbalance the disrespect for the place, the solemn service, and herself which this want of preparation of mind and body expressed, and for the first time a sort of doubt of their aptitude for one another occurred to her; *too late*, as she weakly imagined, to be entertained.

For the first time in her life (and this upon her bridal day) her neatness was out of place, and blushes more scarlet than those of maiden modesty covered her face with a distressing sense of shame at the discrepancy between her own appearance and that of the man beside her.

But the working-day, sullied aspect of the bridegroom's attire, in contrast with the purity and niceness of the bride's, was not the worst point of unlikeness between them.

In her face (which was fair as one of Raphael's angels) truth, innocence, and honesty were written with a golden clearness ; in his these virtues were reversed—the eye wavered with conscious falsehood, the brow in its closeness indicated cunning, and, when not sensual, the expression of the mouth became morose. But May, who had been laughed out of the infallibility of first impressions, (since when she had learned to think Nathan very agreeable and amiable,) only knew that, taken as a whole, the face was rather handsome than otherwise ; and of his temper and disposition, what could she learn in those short evening hours when the cares and labor of the day were done and Nathan relaxed into a lover ?

Shall we wait to see them come forth, followed by the eyes of the pew openers, and confronted by those of the beadle, who stands just within the portico, in the full glory of his cocked hat and gold-laced capes, with his brass-headed staff of office in his left hand, and a huge pinch of snuff in the act of being conveyed to his Bardolphian nose between the thumb and first finger of the right ? See ! the sun shines out and slants its beams upon the scene painter, and his bride, whose light form in her filmy robe clings to his side like the luminous edge skirting a darksome cloud in winter. Morally as well as externally the metaphor holds good ; but who,

(as they pass from the church steps to mingle and be lost sight of in the stream of humanity flowing through the great thoroughfare before them,) who shall say which moiety in this union of good and evil shall hereafter conquer? Shall the bright speak, born of its nearness to heaven, absorb the cloud into its own fair splendor? or shall *this* in its sullen darkness involve the light?

Alas! poor May; the struggle has already commenced, or rather, in the meek helplessness of her disposition, her submission. She cannot hide from herself that her innocent eyes have recognized that something in her husband's looks which, while disgustingly accounting for his conduct and appearance, fills her with apprehension and loathing. This first bitter test of the firmness of her affection has already shaken it, and her hand leans less confidently on the arm of her husband than it did the overnight on that of her lover.

Let us follow them home and into the room the decoration of which Abel Hardstaff had pronounced so pretty, and which, to May's quick perception, seemed so much more, that, with a sudden reaction of feeling, she forgave (for the sake of its fair symbolism) the disrespectful conduct of her bridegroom, with all the dis-honor it had cast upon their bridal.

Poor simple girl! The imaged *Love* (which to her

looked pure and beautiful as Parian marble, though but of *clay*) was full of tenderest meaning — a myth, so she translated it, of the spirit of affection which Nathan, on his part as she on hers, desired to pervade their hearts and dwelling; while he, if the truth must be told; had never thought of sentiment in the matter. He felt, when sober, a certain vanity in his right-hand's cunning, which had resulted in the wreath; the Cupid was merely there for ornament. Such things decorate the cots of lovers in the gaslit Arcady of the theatres, and beyond this the artist had no meaning for their presence; and therefore, when May's blue eye turned from the decorated ceiling to himself with a timid look of grateful pleasure, Nathan understood it to convey a proper appreciation of his talent, and, for the sake of heightening it, could scarcely forbear throwing in another fib, and assuring her that it had all been done over night; but remembering how late he had been with the friends with whom she lodged, and how early (by his own account) he had attended his supposititious engagement in the city this morning, he found himself obliged to forego the opportunity, neat as it was.

It required but few days of wifehood to show May, not only the poverty of her husband's wardrobe and purse, but his worse want of principle and truthfulness. He seemed to have made *Rochefoucauld's* maxim, that

received, added to which the habit of drink, which for one short week he had resisted, came back again in full force, overwhelming the miserable girl with new and terrible affliction. At first, after these breaches of decency and respect for her, he affected the greatest anger against himself, and attributed the occurrence to the custom prevalent with artisans of drinking together on such occasions and to the excitability of his own feelings from very joy that she was his—thus softening with tacit flattery the wounds he inflicted on her. But after a little time these outbreaks became so frequent that she could no longer doubt herself the wife of an habitual drunkard; and with this conviction the flowery links of faith and hope wore out together, making a very fetter of their bond.

Midnight, sometimes the breaking dawn, found her, with swollen eyes and beating heart, waiting in fear and dreading the return of this man who but a long month since had been so eager to make her the "loadstone of his home," the "joy of his life," the "anchor of his affections," and for whom she had parted with the pecuniary independence and plenty of respectable servitude

and that cheerfulness which freedom from all anxiety bestows.

Then there came with his occasional awakenings of conscience a sense of self-upbraiding, which reacted in irritability or ferocious outbreaks of temper, crushing out of her meek and loving nature all its gentleness, making her face thin and her voice sharp, and leaving but the careworn outline of a form that a few weeks back had been symmetry itself. So day by day her hair lost its brightness and her eyes their light; she grew careless of her personal appearance; her dress hung upon her rapidly declining figure, and was never altered; her home grew neglected; the warmth and neatness of her fireside waned. What cared she for either when the companion of them (that should be) was squandering in an alehouse whatever he had earned towards their maintenance throughout the day, while she sat there miserable and alone, fearing, while wishing for his coming, lest he should be in the state she was now almost nightly accustomed to see him—the gross, heavy bacchanalianism of *beer*?

And for all this was there no help? Where was the powerful ægis of her young, pure beauty, the arrowy words tipped with the honey of tenderness and persuasion, which she might have used against him and conquered? Alas! May wanted the moral courage

that should have interposed and defended him even from himself. She had tears, but not firmness, and, when her first timid efforts failed, gave up when she should most have struggled; and so, not gradually, but almost at once, sank down into the very being Abel Hardstaff had prognosticated—a nervous, slatternly, broken-spirited, reserved woman, wishing for the shadow of the grave while yet in youth, nor even desiring life when children were given to her.

In the mean while the dust settled on the *clay love* as it did on every thing else in this sad home, turning its beauty to disfigurement, its purity to a soil, till at length it became a darksome eyesore hanging bat-like from the ceiling, with wings forever spread forth as if longing to fly away but for the wire that kept and bound it there. And May, whose perceptions were rather quickened than blunted by suffering, and who saw in it a daily emblem of her own sad state, at last, in the hope of relieving herself of its ever-present memories, thrust it forth into the passage, where Nathan's eye fell upon it. Liking it no better than his wife, it was pushed out into the area, and the door closed upon it.

* * * *

Years went by, sweeping with them Nathan Slack's credit, such as it had been, and his wife's good looks and health, but not her sorrows. The parlor, with its flower-

wretched ceiling, was now exchanged for the ill lighted and worse ventilated basement floor, between the boards of which, on every change of weather, mephitic vapors oozed up from the drains, discoloring the subterranean walls with natural frescoes in incipient fungus and clinging in green mildew to the sides of the mattresses on which they slept, occasioning colds and coughs in the mother and her children, which from repetition became constitutional. These poor little beings lived in fretfulness and discontent, exhibited a peevishness and irritability of temper which added not a little to their mother's trials, increasing by their tiny thanklessness all she suffered, casting back to her with repelling hands and passionate tears the bread she mulcted herself of in order to give them full meals, and often tearing up in purest mischief the garments she had sat up half the night to repair or (perhaps out of some hardly-spared ones of her own) to make, for them. She seemed to overlook the fact that both temper and appetite depend on health, and that, shut up without air or exercise, robbed of their birthright of play and sunshine, it was but natural, without anterior causes, her children should be impatient and wilful, and that, in not providing them with amusement, she was in fact forcing mischief upon them as an occupation.

Other children in the house played out of doors ; but

hers, not having shoes when they had hats, or *vice versa*, breathed the same tainted air night and day, and, as the widest extent of their infantile liberty, never got beyond the yard or the area.

Another consequence of this unhealthy confinement was that when night came they were not prepared to sleep; and therefore, instead of evening bringing with it the calm and leisure which most housewives enjoy, and which enable them at each day's close to strike a balance with its varied, and, but for this period, unfinished labors, May's neighbors were annoyed with the noise and cries of her children as long as she herself remained up.

Miserable mother, and yet more miserable children, who have the misconduct of your parents visited on you even in those days of utter helplessness! Without a doubt the primary root of all this home evil was to be found in Nathan Slack's love of drink and want of principle, which prevented him, though an excellent workman, from obtaining constant employment or continuing in it when obtained; but at the same time May's moral feebleness and want of management doubled the extent of the mischief, and afforded him in the estimation of those who knew nothing of his habits before marriage almost an excuse for his misconduct.

Who knows what smiles, worn through the heart's

martyrdom, and a bright, clear, cheery hearth, and quiet, might have done even with so untoward a patient as the scene painter? Instead of which, May, who was doing all day long, without ever appearing to make headway against her own want of method and tidiness, was sure to be as neglected-looking and dirty in her person as in her place, where every thing was in disorder; and her children, instead of being in their rosy sleep pictures of purity and repose, were more probably crying and struggling on the floor, with its soils for the most part transferred to themselves and clothing. These are not the circumstances that tend to waken the better nature of a man when dormant, or to keep it active when awake; and accordingly, finding none of that comfort which quiet and cleanliness bestow upon the humblest hearth to counterbalance the turmoil, vexations, or disappointments of the day, Nathan Slack spent as short a time as possible beside it and characterized that period with ill temper.

In the mean while Abel Hardstaff remained unmarried; but a sister, through whom he had first known May, lived with him, and kept his rooms so neat and his clothes so well looked after that it seemed as if nothing short of losing her could induce him to be other than a bachelor.

The conscious change in herself and shame for her

poverty-stricken home and appearance had induced Mrs. Slack to give up all her acquaintance shortly after her marriage; and thus Susan Hardstaff had almost or quite lost sight of her; but true friendship does not die out even in the absence of its object; and Susan never ceased to think with interest of her.

Now, it happened that in one of Nathan's fits of intoxication one of his *friends* and companions on those occasions, wanting some money, persuaded him to accept an accommodation bill for twenty pounds, *value received*, payable in three months. Something was said at the time of their mutually benefiting by the transaction; but his friend altered his mind, and Nathan never received a penny of it. At the end of the three months, however, he found himself called upon to meet the amount; and the person who had drawn the bill having got out of the way, the discounter, finding that the wretched scene painter had neither money nor goods of the value, at once arrested and threw him into prison.

On the afternoon of the day on which this happened, a fair and sunny afternoon in June, Susan Hardstaff, who had heard it from her brother, slipped on her coarse but clean straw bonnet, and, taking with her a little basket of necessaries, ran down the area steps of Mrs. Slack's lodging in order to avoid the other persons in the house, and knocked very gently at the door. No

one answered; but she heard sounds between sobs and moans and the fractious wrangling of children; and, taking courage from the pure feeling of kindness with which she came, she pushed open the door and went in. There lay May, with her face buried in the bed and her tarnished hair tossed down about her shoulders, the very picture of heart-broken hopelessness.

Though four o'clock on a summer's day, the stained and dirty tablecloth remained on one end of a deal table, and was covered with the unwashed breakfast things and remnants of the morning meal, while the other was heaped with potatoes half pared in preparation for dinner; and on the floor, in the midst of an emptied basket of peas,— which the one opened and ate, and the other crunched a part of such as pleased her and then threw back again into the basket,— sat two pretty but very dirty children. The dresser had scarcely three plates remaining on it; but a heap of clothes, washed the week before, were tumbled together on a corner of the shelf to be ironed or put on rough dried as might happen; while the floor, slopped and filthy and only partially covered by a very ragged piece of carpet, perfected the disarray and comfortless appearance of the room.

“ Do not cry, my poor girl,” said Susan, lifting May tenderly, and speaking in a voice which like her looks overflowed with compassion for her quondam friend.

“Your tears cannot undo what is done, nor help yourself or husband to endure it; take courage and be patient; and who knows but that, as morning comes out of night, there may be sunshine under this thick darkness? There, that is right; get up and bathe your eyes and put your hair and dress to rights; and I will look after your place and the children while you go to your husband and comfort him, for doubtless he needs it.”

“But will he let me?” cried May, looking round as if she had waked from a dream. “Will he not be angry with me for leaving home and the little ones, and perhaps drive me from him with hard words?”

“No, depend upon it,” said Susan, dryly; “he will only be too glad to see you; for he must want food unless he had money to procure it; if he had not, he is tame enough by this time, you may be sure. There, don’t stay to put any thing away; I shall not expect you home to-night, for you will hardly have time to walk there and see your husband before it will be time to come away.” And, thus hurrying her off, Susan Hardstaff put the basket she had brought with her upon May’s arm, and, bidding God bless her, fairly pushed her out of doors before the children could suspect she was leaving them.

In the mean while Nathan Slack, who had never for one moment contemplated such a termination to the

affair, but had trusted to the assurances of his unprincipled partner in it to furnish the means of meeting the bill, wakened, on finding himself within the walls of a prison, to the dishonesty, and, what was then infinitely more a source of discontent to him, the *folly*, of the transaction. It would have been bad enough to have gone to jail for his own debts ; but to have been duped in order to benefit another, who, not satisfied with defrauding him of all participation in the money, could then heartlessly throw the responsibility upon his shoulders and actually suffer him to be sent to prison, was almost more than he could bear ; and by turns he chafed himself into a rage or sank into complete prostration. In this state of mind he had consideration even for his wife and children, and added to the misery of his position a picture of their loneliness and want which became absolutely pathetic now that it was forced upon them involuntarily. *Time*, too, and *labor*, for the first occasion in his existence, grew into matters of importance and privilege ; and the thought that the advantages of both were forcibly withheld from him assumed a shape of grievous loss and wrong ; so that when poor May arrived, which was as quickly as her own strength and the weight of Susan's basket would permit her, she found her husband in a much more sobered and sympathizing frame of feeling than she had ever before seen him in ; while the

sight of her wan, thin face, first to find him out in his misery, wakened a host of wholesome self-upbraiding, and suddenly overflowed his cup of commiseration for *himself* with sprinklings of it for her — a state of feeling which gave such kindness to his looks and gentleness to his accents that May found her heart drawn towards him with a tenderness she had never before experienced; and after a moment's scrutiny, as if to satisfy herself that it was *real*, she cast herself with a sudden impulse in his arms weeping, she could scarcely tell whether with grief or joy, and Nathan kept her there; and it was no dream — she felt a tear fall on her neck. That night the scene painter was seized with symptoms of illness, which resulted in fever; and for an entire week May never left him night or day. She felt, however, no anxiety for her children; for Abel Hardstaff had called several times to bid her be under no apprehension for them, as his sister found no trouble in looking after them, and would continue to do so until her return.

At the end of this time, however, her husband's disorder took a favorable change; and, though very weak and exhausted, hopes were given her that his life would be spared, which at one stage of his illness had been doubtful; but, as he required careful nursing more than ever, she was still unable to visit home, where, in every

interval of her attendance on him, her thoughts were always wandering. The long hours of lingering debility which ensued gave Nathan ample time for reflection; and much of repentance and regret mingled with it. He saw as in a glass his wasted opportunities pass by him, felt how *time* and talent had been given him in vain, and groaned with anguish over his own heartlessness and folly which had left but a shade between his family's position and that of the beggars in the streets. May's conduct, too, throughout his illness had shown him more of her inner nature and roused in him a more real affection than he had ever felt for her in his life; she was no longer the timid, spiritless, cold-mannered woman, seeming indifferent to every thing save the reality of despair, but an anxious, affectionate helpmate, exerting herself to the very utmost to tend and comfort him, affecting courage in order to give him hope, working throughout the day to provide the nourishment required for him, and waking at night to minister, and, often when she thought he slept, to pray, for him—prayers that had their answer in his progressive restoration, in these painful but healthy retrospections, and in his changing feelings to herself. The *clay love* was becoming spiritualized — the morn was breaking out of darkness.

And now at length a day arrived when May could

comfortably leave her husband to pay a hasty visit to her children. The grated windows and darksome walls of the gloomy prison were left behind ; and she almost ran through the streets in her eagerness to meet them. At last the house is reached ; and she enters her humble lodgings, wondering how her little ones will look and what they will say at seeing her. But can these rooms, with their white boards and whiter ceilings and every thing in them looking so fresh and bright, be really hers ? Yes ; and here is the handmaid who has effected the alteration — kind Susan Hardstaff, with her warm hand grasp and pleasant smile. But where, where are the children ?

“ Why, at school,” said Susan, laughing.

“ At school,” repeated May, with something very like reproach in her tone. “ Poor little things ! ”

“ Yes ; and you can’t think how happy they are,” continued Susan, affecting not to notice the pity implied in May’s expression ; “ but you will hear when four o’clock comes. So now tell me all about poor Nathan and yourself. The clock will strike presently,” she continued, observing poor May’s distress, “ and then you shall tell me which is best for them — to stop at home in your way all the day long, making themselves dirty and getting into all sorts of mischief, or to be where they are kept out of both and are at the same time

taught, without the toil of such teaching as yours and mine would be, those first steps in learning which were so painful and laborious to us. At the 'Infant School,' while they are *playing* they are gaining knowledge; and you cannot think how happy they are there and how anxious they are always to return to it."

I am obliged to own that more of shame than gratification entered into May's feelings as she gazed round on the altered appearance of her home. Nor did she quite like Susan's plan of sending the little ones to school; but in the midst of her secret chagrin there came bounding down the area steps, laughing their farewell of an elder girl, who had brought them so far on their way and now stood watching them from the top, two happy-looking, pink-cheeked, sprightly children, who raced forward to meet Susan, and fell into the arms of their poor mother, whose heart, too genuinely delighted in the change effected in them to suffer for a moment a petty jealousy to overshadow it, with a generous outburst of feeling alternately clasped them to her bosom, and then, between tears and caresses, expressed as best she could her thanks to Susan. They were so clean, so fresh looking and happy,—so different from the quarrelsome, and, by contrast, squalid-looking beings she had left,—that it seemed impossible little better than a fort-

night should have made so complete an improvement in them.

“The fact is, my dear May, you had no time for keeping things to rights,” said Susan, kindly. “And I am sure I should have managed no better had I kept little Nat and May at home; but, with them out of the way, it is easy to put the place in order and to keep it so; besides, it gives plenty of time for mending and washing their clothes, without running the business of the day into the only hours your husband is at home and can enjoy it with you. Now, only listen to those little things’ prattle; they are telling you all they have learned and played at to-day. How they will amuse you and their father! and, as they have had an hour or two’s exercise in the play ground, by the time you have had tea they will be ready for bed; and then the whole evening will be yours for needlework. Now, do you forgive me for sending them, and agree with me that it is a better plan and has more real love in it for the little things themselves than the keeping them at home to their own and your discomfort?”

“But, Susan,” interrupted May, “I am afraid I shall never be able to keep things looking as nice as they are now; if I could,” — and she laughed with hysterical joy as she spoke, — “I think I might be a happier wife than I have ever been, and Nathan a different man.”

"But there is no difficulty in it when once you begin with a determination to go on," said Susan, earnestly; "it only wants method; and there, you know, I had the advantage of you. What should you know of the best way of doing household work who were always busied with ball dresses and such like things? But I will come in every day for a while and show you my plan, so that by the time Nathan comes back it will be *your own*; and you have only to keep to it to insure comfort at your hearth for your husband, your children, and yourself. And O, dear May, what more does a good wife want? Affection follows it, for a man cannot be indifferent to the blessings of a quiet, cleanly home; it creates habits of order and decency in your children, and encourages carefulness on the part of your husband, who has then something to toil for worth mentioning. And now I have another little bit of hope for you; only we must not be too sanguine of its being realized, besides that Nathan may not perhaps agree to it; but Abel has been again and again to Mr. Zumpt, the bill discounter, and has represented as strongly as he could the uselessness of the step he has taken with regard to your husband, and the poverty and sorrow he is inflicting on you and your innocent children; while, on the other hand, he has taken upon himself to say that, if set at liberty, Nathan would in all probability be willing to pay the money by

instalments; and though this seems very hard, dear May, considering that he did not have the spending of any part of it, who knows but that, after all, the suffering may be worth the cost?"

"O, only too gladly would he pay it, Susan, if this man would once more give him the freedom to earn it," cried the poor wife.

"Well, I think he is almost certain to do it," rejoined her friend; "but now we will talk of something else."

In brief, a few weeks later Nathan Slack was released from prison, his creditor withdrew the detainer against him, and so ended his *sejour* in Whitecross Street, but not its effects: from henceforth he resisted intemperance, and being, as I before said, a first-rate workman, found no difficulty in obtaining employment as soon as his change of character established itself. Ambition now took the place of that sottish recklessness which had kept him indifferent to every thing but self-indulgence, and he became as remarkable for industry and forethought as he had been for the want of these qualities.

In the mean while Susan's system had not been thrown away upon her friend. May had tried with her whole heart to break herself of her ill habits and acquire that economy of time and method which she perceived was

the secret of good housewifery ; and her docility and perseverance were richly rewarded in their effects upon her lowly home and the attraction thus cast around it ; for her husband, whose artist eyes, no longer offended by its appearance and that of herself and children, came home as to an ark of rest after the occupation of the day, delighted to sit at his own fireside, while little Nat leaned beside him and May clambered on his knee ; and May, his own dear May, sat opposite, busied with her work, from which she only lifted her eyes to cast a loving look upon the group, and then perchance to the *clay love*, purified, which, once more brought within doors, looked in its silken bands above the chimney piece as if content to hover there forever. They had prepared it, too, even as pure love prepares the heart, so that every stain that fell upon it might be washed off and its own whiteness show the fairer for the passing blemish.

And now every day brings them closer to a new and healthier home ; for Nathan has become a member of a building society and aims at the honor of a freehold which shall be his son's after him ; and May, who has the same hope at heart, finds time to use her needle in behalf of it.

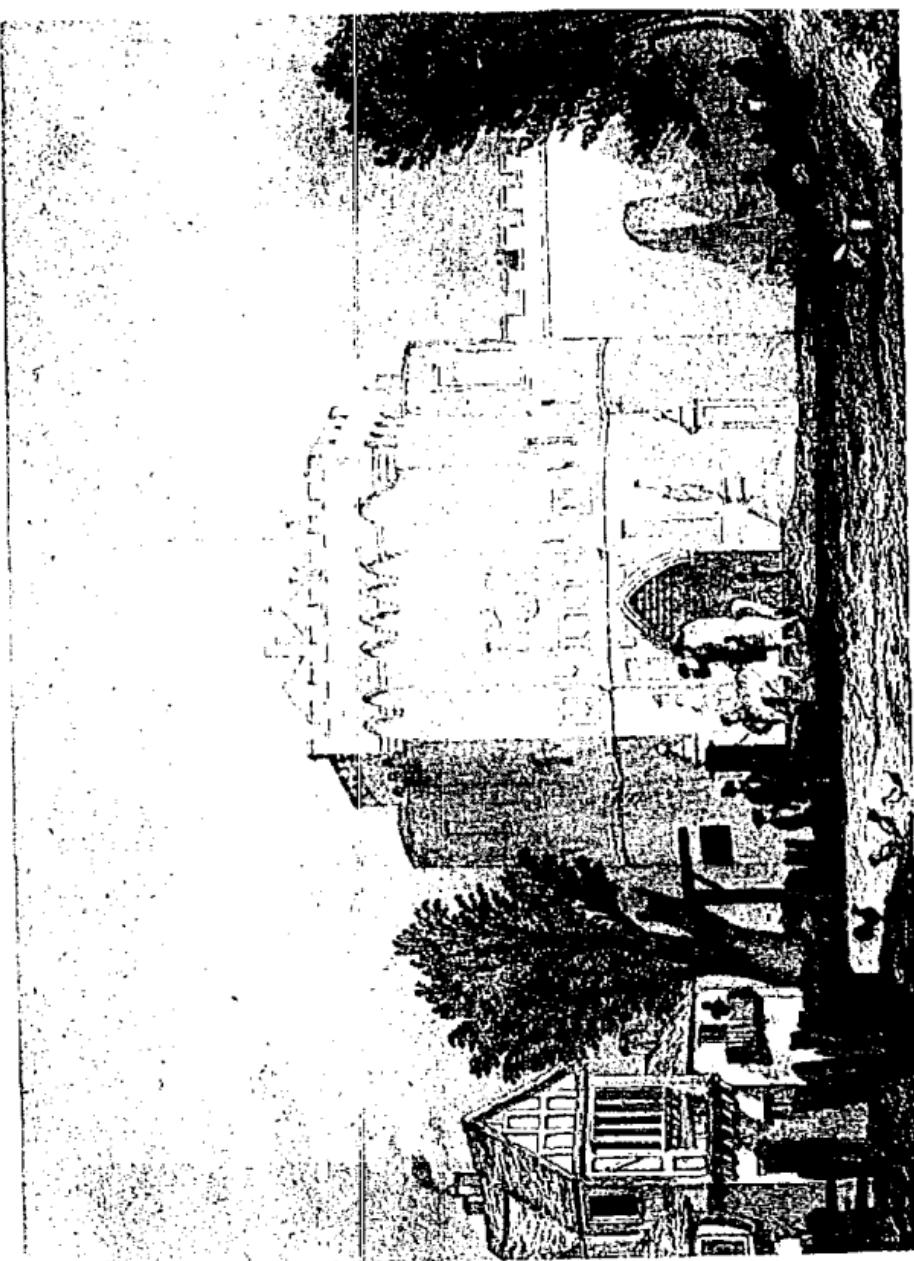
Here, therefore, we shall leave them, happy in their own and children's society and in the true friendship of

Abel Hardstaff and his sister, but for whom, in all probability, the Image of Love in Clay would have mouldered to its native element, and that of which it was the myth in the heart of the scene painter and his wife never have known regeneration.

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SOUTHAMPTON.: KING HENRY V.

Amaranth, or Token of Remembrance (1847-1855); 1855; American Periodicals
pg. 262A



SOUTHAMPTON.

KING HENRY V.

Chorus. AND the scene
Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton.

This building is still in good preservation: it is situated in the Place de la Pucelle, so called from its being the scene of the execution of the celebrated Joan of Arc, to whose memory a monument is erected. This fabric is shown in the engraving.

Upon the accession of Henry VI., the Duke of Bedford was constituted chief councillor and protector of the king, then an infant, and appointed at the same time Regent of France. But all his splendid achievements in the "land of the Gaul," great, glorious, and gallant as they were, lie forever obscured beneath one dark

deed of inhumanity — his cruel and savage treatment of the most undaunted of his foes — the enthusiastic Maid of Orleans, Joan of Arc. The duke died at Rouen September 14, 1435, and was interred in the Cathedral of Notre Dame there, deeply lamented by the English people.

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